Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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CYRILLE'S WIDOW LEADS TRIBUTES AS HAWTHORNS REMEMBERS

Cyrille with Julia when he received the MBE in 2008

CYRILLE Regis's widow has become the first person to sign a Book of Remembrance devoted to the legendary Baggies striker at The Hawthorns.

Julia Regis and other family members visited the ground on Monday to write the first tributes to Albion's famous No.9. It will now be in place at The Hawthorns for supporters to add their own personal tributes to Regis, who died last week aged 59.

The book will eventually be presented to Julia along with the avalanche of emails and letters which have poured in to the club in memory of Regis. "Every comment and tribute is so precious to us and we will be sure to read every one of them," said the family last week.

West Brom travelled to Everton over the weekend, with fans and players alike paying their respects to a Hawthorns hero, who became talismanic as part of the 'Three Degrees' consisting of Regis, Laurie Cunningham and Brendon Batson.

The funeral takes place on Tuesday, during a private family service, but West Bromwich Albion have confirmed The Hawthorns will stage a service to honour Cyrille's life immediately afterwards. The club said this event will be 'a celebration of his life and career'. It will allow Cyrille's fans to join his family at the stadium. The service for the Albion, Wolves, Coventry and Villa star will be held in the East Stand. It will be conducted from 11am by Pastor David Carr from the church Cyrille attended, the Renewal Christian Centre in Solihull.

There will be seats for supporters and the public who want to pay their respects to one of the Baggies' all-time greats. The club will announce details of how fans can attend, see their website for details. Otherwise, supporters will have a chance to say their farewells earlier in the day, as Cyrille's funeral cortege will leave The Hawthorns at 8.45am. The club are making plans to accommodate fans who want to salute Cyrille.

Colleagues and friends who want to attend the service should email rob.doyle@stellargroup.co.uk

● Fury – See Back Page

Warning as work stops in wake of Carillion collapse

HOSPITAL BUILD DELAY 'WEEKS'

A HEALTH chief has warned it may be 'weeks or even longer' before work starts again on the £350 million Midland Metropolitan hospital in the wake of the Carillion collapse.

Work ground to a halt at the site a week ago after the Wolverhampton construction firm building the hospital went into liquidation. But Toby Lewis, chief executive of Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "We're working around the clock to get this Midland Metropolitan site back up and working."

Report by Simon Penfold

The hospital is currently only two thirds complete, but he added: "We have been very clear, local partners have been very clear, Ministers have been very clear that there is only one strategy – which is to get this hospital built in as rapid a time as we can."

The work was being carried out by a Carillion joint venture set up specially for the contract, called The Hospital Company.

Mr Lewis said: "The coalition of organisations that form the Hospital Company have a responsibility working to find us a new builder and a new contractor who can finish the job. We are two thirds of the way through so, plainly, we have a third left to do. We will experience some weeks or even longer when the cranes are not active.

"But what is really important over the next few days and weeks is that we get the senior leadership team who were working on the project to continue to work on the project, making sure that we have got a safe site, a secure site and detailed plans for how to finish this development."

Mr Lewis added: "This development isn't about having fantastic buildings or a great environment, although of course it does do that.

"It is about bringing together hospital services which are currently stretched over two locations in one of the most deprived parts of the country.

"And by bringing those overstretched emergency departments from West Brom and Birmingham together we are going to be able to offer a better seven-day service.

● Continue – See page 8

Pounds are lost but charity gains

Tracey Hixon and Anna Wythes from Weight Watchers present cheque to Blue Watch Commander Temple Jones and Station Commander John Elsworth

A SLIMMING group has put its weight behind a charity by shedding a combined total of 88 stone.

Haden Cross Community Fire Station in Cradley Heath received a cheque for £1,400 for the Firefighters Charity which was raised by the local Weight Watchers group in a gala event attended by 200 people.

The charity supports firefighters who are injured in the line of duty and helps with rehabilitation and supporting their families.

Catwalk

For the event, 17 people who lost a combined total of 88 stones took to the catwalk to strut their stuff after losing weight as well as raise the money for charity.

Blue watch commander Temple Jones said: "This amount of money is a godsend really because the charity is a national one so the money goes towards helping firefighters across the UK. Any funding we can get is a lifeline."

The slimming group holds weekly meetings at the fire station and decided to raise money for them.

CELEBRATE

Marston's merry £4m Christmas

MARSTON'S enjoyed record Christmas Day sales of £4 million – as revellers flocked to its pubs and restaurants for their turkey and trimmings.

The Wolverhampton-based firm revealed the figure in a trading update as bosses gathered for annual general meeting at Molineux. Chief executive Ralph Findlay said he was pleased with the bumper festive performance – up 5.4 per cent on last year – which he put down to a surge in people heading out to pubs for Christmas dinner.

He added: "It shows that people are now more likely to go out and celebrate on the big day and our pubs are capturing a share of that."

For the 16 weeks to January 20 there was overall growth in sales and other earnings.

POLICE

Woman, 93, dies after bus accident

A 93-YEAR-OLD woman has died after being hit by a bus in Bearwood.

Police have appealed for witnesses to the accident at the junction of Poplar Road and Bearwood Road at about 5pm on Monday. The women suffered severe injuries and was taken to hospital where she was later pronounced dead. Police say she is not being named at this stage but her family have been informed.

Witnesses should call West Midlands Police on 101 or email fl_collision_invest@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

PLANNING

Energy plant bid near the M5 is put on hold

PLANS to build an energy facility overlooking the M5 are have been put on hold.

A planning application has been submitted to Sandwell Council for a 10,000 square metre plant at Giffards Recycling, off Kelvin Way, West Bromwich. Some 450 people have signed a protest petition.

The planning committee deferred the application to obtain more information about traffic flows and highway issues.

INSIDE

IN THE SWIM AT GAMES VENUE

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Flats on way as coach firm moves out

Coach company site

DOZENS of new homes will be built on the site of a coach company – which is relocating as part of its own expansion plans.

A total of 54 apartments and four homes will be built on Thandi Coaches in Smethwick after approval was granted by Sandwell Council.

The travel firm, which runs hundreds of coaches in the area, will be moving to a new site as it looks to expand its operation. The project has been carried out as part of a deal between the firm and the council.

Avi Thandi, general manager of Thandi Coaches, said: "We are expanding our operation and going bigger. This is a long-term plan that we already decided with Sandwell Council."

Mr Thandi said the company would move to a new site within the next month. The new properties will mainly consist of flats, which will range from two to four storeys.

The housing development will directly link to a nearby housing development currently being built on Cranford Street, with both located near the planned Midland Met Hospital.

Sandwell Council's planning committee gave the green light to the plans at its latest meeting. A planning report said: "The applicant proposes to construct 54 apartments and four houses.

The houses would be two storey and the apartment blocks would be a mix of two, three and four storey, with the four storey elements being situated on the coroner of the site.

"The access to the site is proposed from Alma Street.

"The proposal provides 68 parking spaces which include eight visitor spaces along with secure cycle provision. Bin storage is also provided."

£150,000 to redesign island and cut traffic

LONG-AWAITED plans to revamp a notoriously-congested roundabout have finally taken a step forward.

But it could still be up to two years before any improvements actually get under way.

Transport bosses are set to approve a funding bid to launch a scheme aimed at cutting congestion at the busy Birchley Island in Oldbury. But the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) said it could be 2020 before any work starts.

Roads chiefs have called for action at the island for years due to congestion faced by drivers daily. The LEP said a project review was being carried out and when complete detailed designs would follow.

It said a 'start on site date' was 'anticipated before 2020'. Board members are set to approve £150,000 to allow design work to progress but substantial funding for the project has so far proved to be a stumbling block.

Feasibility

Black Country LEP board member Ninder Johal said it was likely the group would wait for the outcome of a feasibility study and find out how much the scheme would cost before making a decision over whether to back it.

Papers ahead of the next board meeting state: "Birchley Island is a key gateway to the Black Country and Birmingham. The current configuration of island contributes to significant levels of congestion across the wider area.

The overhaul of Birchley Island at junction two of the M5 has been in the pipeline since 2014. The island handles thousands of vehicles every day and has junctions for the Wolverhampton Road and M5.

The scheme preferred by the council would see changes to lanes and also involve extending Wolverhampton Road on a new roadway through the roundabout to create a two-way 'hamburger' island at a cost of around £12.7 million.

Panto collections raise £1,600

The cast of Aladdin at Oldbury Rep held charity collections after performances at the Barlow Theatre

OLDBURY Rep's annual panto charity collection has raised more than £1,600 to be divided between the Stroke Association and Edward's Trust.

Audiences at this month's production of Aladdin, written by Rep member Ian Thompson, dug deep to contribute to the good causes.

Ten performances were put on at the Barlow Theatre, Langley, the home of Oldbury Rep, bringing a smile to audiences of all ages.

The final performance was on Saturday, in front of a 96 per cent capacity audience.

Edward's Trust is a West Midlands-based charity founded by Peter and Hilary Dent in memory of their son Edward, who died of cancer when he was seven.

It offers support to children and families who are facing up to the loss of a loved one or experiencing bereavement.

The other chosen charity, the Stroke Association, helps stroke survivors to make the best recovery they can, campaigns for better care, and funds research into finding new treatments and ways of preventing strokes.

Further details of these charities can be found at www.edwardstrust.org.uk and www.stroke.org.uk

An Oldbury Rep spokesperson said: "The company is pleased to be able to support both local and national charities throughout the year, thanks to the continued generosity of its audiences even in these difficult financial times."

Work restarts at Paradise in wake of Carillion crisis

WORK has restarted on the £700 million Paradise Birmingham scheme – one of the region's biggest regeneration developments – a week after the collapse of Carillion brought construction to a halt.

Demolition contractor DSM has restarted work clearing the western part of the site, around the former Birmingham Conservatoire and Chamberlain House, preparing the way for builder BAM to start contruction of the Two Chamberlain Square office building next month.

But the wider infrastructure work and construction of the nearly-finished One Chamberlain Square building remains at a standstill while the developers seek a replacement for Carillion.

Rob Groves, regional director of Argent, development managers for Paradise Birmingham, said: "We can confirm that works have re-commenced on the site clearance of the former Birmingham Conservatoire, Fletchers Walk and Chamberlain House area."

"Originally appointed by Carillion, demolition contractor DSM is, in the meantime, continuing its work on the ongoing site preparation to ensure the area is ready for the next phase. This will enable BAM to commence construction on Two Chamberlain Square in February, as programmed."

Youth panel has a musical voice

BIRMINGHAM'S Symphony Hall and Town Hall is forming a youth panel to help improve its programme of live music.

The aim is to develop a diverse range of musical entertainment at the venues that is relevant and representative of the city of Birmingham.

Panel members will work with high level arts industry professionals and the THSH board of trustees.

The panel is open to people living in the city aged between 18 and 25 who need to visit https://www.thsh.co.uk/get-involved/young-people/youth-panel application to download an application.

The deadline for people to send off the completed applications is Monday, February 12.

£14,000 grant to boost numbers at museum

A MUSEUM founded over 100 years ago by world famous chocolate-maker George Cadbury has been awarded a £14,000 grant to help protect its future.

Selly Manor Museum in Bournville will use the money to develop a five-year business plan to boost visitor numbers.

MP Spellar wins support in bid to save music venues

A CAMPAIGN to stop music venues being threatened with closure has won support from ministers, who said developers must be responsible for soundproofing new-build properties.

Sajid Javid, the Housing Secretary, said he would work with the music industry to improve planning policy. It followed a campaign led by Warley's Labour MP John Spellar that was backed by stars including Sir Paul McCartney and Pink Floyd's Nick Mason.

The campaign highlighted the threat to grassroots music clubs and gig venues, which have been forced to close owing to noise complaints by new residents. Mr Javid said in future there would be a responsibility on property developers to identify and solve potential sound problems when building near to music venues. Music venues play a vital role in our communities, bringing people together and contributing to the local economy and supporting the country's grass roots music culture," he said.

Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson, the MP for West Bromwich East, said: "It is great news that John Spellar's campaign is being backed by the Government. It is a huge victory for venues, artists and music lovers."

He added that the campaign had 'mobilised the whole of the UK's music industry to call for change – and it won'.

Substance misuse service to launch

A NEWLY-merged alcohol and drug service for a Black Country borough will launch next month.

The service, which is funded by Sandwell Council's public health department, will be run by Cranstoun Sandwell and will offer treatment and recovery services.

Bosses said a key focus of the new service will be 'to prevent alcohol and drug misuse through promoting a self-help approach''.

Peter Glass, director of operations for Cranstoun, said: "Cranstoun are very excited to continue to deliver the substance misuse services in Sandwell.

"We will keep developing our partnership approach and build on the already excellent relationships we have in Sandwell."

Councillor Elaine Costigan, cabinet member for public health and protection, said: "This will make sure we continue giving excellent levels of support to help people recover from alcohol and drug dependence.

"It will also help prevent people developing habits that can affect their health and wellbeing."

Doberman Diesel's great train journey

Diesel, after his adventures

A DOG travelled more than 100 miles on a train and even changed lines before being rescued.

Diesel the doberman was taken in by volunteers who believed he was a stray animal, after he was found wandering around Birmingham's New Street Station.

However after he was taken to the vets, the dog's microchip was traced back to the city of Huddersfield, a journey of more than three hours away. The dog was then taken to Hilbrae Kennels in Telford, where staff were keen to reunite him with his owners. And the story did have a happy ending, as on Saturday the owners were found and he was sent back to his home town.

The kennels said: "We are delighted to be able to tell everyone that Diesel the Doberman has now been collected by his owners and has gone back home. He was in the care of a relative who apparently let his owners down. Don't you just love a happy ending."

After finding the dog in Birmingham, vets worked out that he had got onto a train and managed to swap trains at Manchester Piccadilly, with the journey predicted to be a total of seven hours. Jamie Lee-Barnett, from Huddersfield, was reunited with his beloved dog on Saturday, and thanked the kennels for helping his pet home.

He said: "Thank you so much everyone for the help, and a massive thank you to the kennels, you were brilliant thank you so much."

Another member of the public said the dog may have been stolen, as Kennel Club-registered doberman puppies are among the most popular breed of dogs in the UK, and can sell for up to £2,500.

£60m scheme for Games is going swimmingly

THE location of a £60 million aquatics centre to be built in the Black Country for the 2022 Commonwealth Games has been revealed.

The state-of-the-art facility will be built on playing fields in Londonderry Lane, Smethwick, and will feature an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a 25-metre diving pool and 5,000 spectator seats.

The centre will host swimming and diving events at the Games in four years' time, after Birmingham was confirmed as the host city for the event last month.

Once the competition is over, the centre will serve as a leisure facility for the public.

Work is expected to start early next year to ensure it is up and running in time for the Games.

The aquatics centre will also have two activity studios, a 12-court sports hall, a 125-station gym, a 25-station ladies-only gym, an indoor cycling studio, a sauna/steam room and a cafe.

Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling said the arrival of the Games would bring major benefits for the borough.

Benefits

He said: "The Commonwealth Games is going to be a fantastic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the West Midlands.

"Here in Sandwell, we are very proud to be part of it and to be chosen to host the aquatics centre, which will include diving and swimming events. The eyes of the world will be on Sandwell and the benefits to the local economy will be huge with significant investment into the area and athletes and visitors from around the globe."

Councillor Eling added: "We were already looking to improve swimming facilities in the south of the borough. With the Commonwealth Games coming to Birmingham, we will now be able to build an even better new leisure facility to serve the local community for decades to come. I am delighted we can now announce our proposed site for the centre.

"Londonderry Playing Fields is well-placed to meet the needs of local people and is in an area highlighted as having a high demand for a swimming facility."

Leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Steve Eling, Chair of Warley Wasps Swimming Club, Ray Evans, and Chief Executive of Sandwell Leisure Trust Ash Rai at playing fields in Londonderry Lane, Smethwick

The authority will need planning permission before work can start and Councillor Eling said that there would be a consultation process with residents and businesses on the scheme.

The cost of building the new centre will be met by various organisations, including the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, Sandwell Council and Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the council said.

Bosses also revealed that they would look to provide alternative space for playing fields in the borough.

The bidding process has been beset with problems, with the South African city of Durban awarded the Games in 2015 before being stripped of the event because it did not meet the CGF criteria.

After Birmingham's bid was initially deemed to not meet the necessary criteria, previously interested cities such as Victoria in Canada and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia were given another two months to apply, but none came forward.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Day to remember Holocaust victims

THE Lord Mayor of Birmingham will lead the city's Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations at the council house on Sunday.

The day commemorates the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and Nazi persecutions, as well as other genocides around the world.

The ceremony will be hosted by Councillor Tristan Chatfield in the council house's banqueting suite. All are welcome and admission is free.

Doors open at 1pm, and visitors will be invited to light a candle of remembrance from 1.30pm with the commemorative ceremony then starting at 2pm.

Co-op cash boost for city musicians

YOUNG musicians in Birmingham are celebrating after being awarded £2,500 to buy new instruments. A total of 36 groups, projects and charities have scooped a share of £57,000 from Central England Co-operative.

One of the groups is Birmingham Youth Empowerment Project, and members have decided to spend the cash on shiny new instruments. A diverse range of projects picked from across 16 counties have been handed funding. Visit communities.centralengland.coop to find out more about applying for funding.

Thousands fight to block factory

THOUSANDS of people have backed a campaign to block a railway concrete sleeper factory. Network Rail want to build the facility at the Bescot railway sidings in Friar Park, Wednesbury.

The firm held a meeting earlier this month to tell residents about the scheme, which will create 600,000 sleepers a year – and 3,000 people have now signed a petition.

Jenny Lloyd, of Durham Road, is behind one of the petitions. She said: "They are worried about the health issues. There are a lot of people in the area with COPD and asthma."

Historic park house reopens after facelift

THE official opening of Lightwoods House in Bearwood after its £5 million revamp has taken place.

Council bosses have announced. The Mayor of Sandwell will open the Grade II-listed building following a major restoration funded by the council and national lottery cash.

Chiefs said the late 18th Century house 'has been restored to its former glory' and is now a venue for weddings, events and community groups.

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COUNTY NEWS

Disability centre in £55k revamp

A COUNCIL-RUN centre for people with disabilities has officially reopened after a £55,000 revamp.

Wolverhampton's Brickkiln Centre now boasts colour-coded rooms, Braille signage and contrasting doors and handles to help people with a visual impairment get around more easily. It was officially opened to the public by the Deputy Mayor of Wolverhampton Councillor Phil Page and Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE, cabinet member for adult services.

Redevelopment of the Cherry Street centre was part of a wider £180,000 scheme to renovate three facilities for people with disabilities.

Nova recruitment workers are saved

A WEST Midland recruitment and training agency has been bought out of administration.

The sale of Nova Recruitment by Steven Stokes and Raj Mittal, partners with business advisory firm FRP Advisory, has secured the jobs of all 12 staff based at its Castle Street, Dudley, and Birmingham premises. It has been bought by Capital Outsourcing Group.

Nova Recruitment had expanded its range of services across a number of sectors as part of its steady growth since formation in 1980, with particular expertise in the industrial, retail and catering sectors.

Developer steps in with school boost

A REGIONAL housebuilder, based in Birmingham, has given a cash boost to a Willenhall school to help it improve its outside space. New Invention Infant School in Cannock Road applied to Persimmon Homes Central to become one of its monthly Community Champions, and was selected to receive a £1,000 donation as part of the match-funded scheme.

Headteacher Debbie Naffati said: "We are committed to providing our children with the very best resources."

Midlands food awards nominations appeal

THE Midlands Food, Drink and Hospitality Awards is set to be the biggest ever, with Pepsi Max as headline sponsor again, it takes place at Edgbaston cricket stadium on June 25.

The awards will recognise and reward bars, restaurants, cafes and other food firms for first class service. Nominations open until April 23. Visit mfdhawards.co.uk to nominate.

Council tribute to borough stalwarts

TRIBUTES were paid at the full council meeting to Cyrille Regis MBE – West Bromwich Albion legend and Freeman of Sandwell.

A minute's silence was held for Cyrille and three long-serving community stalwarts who recently died.

Mayor Councillor Ahmadul Haque said: "It is with great sadness that Sandwell this week lost a freeman of the borough and one of our most inspirational stars, Cyrille Regis. Cyrille was given the freedom in 2004 and was a wonderful ambassador for Sandwell.

"He remains a legend, not only for his excellent play on the pitch for West Bromwich Albion and England, but also for the role he played in the fight against racism in football. He will be very sadly missed."

He also praised the contribution made by Honorary Aldermen Joshua Churchman and Leslie Taylor and Dr Nand Srivastava over many years.

Joshua Churchman worked for charitable organisations in the community and was president of the Sandwell Age Concern agenda. He served as a member of the former Tipton and West Bromwich councils from 1951-74 and was appointed as the first Mayor of the County Borough of West Bromwich in 1966. Leslie Taylor served as a councillor for the former Warley County Borough Council and for Sandwell Council from 1971-91 and was Mayor from 1990-1991.

Dr Srivastava was a member of the independent remuneration panel and a retired senior consultant working in public health medicine with special interest in palliative care services. He was made an MBE by the Queen.

Ofsted unhappy with high exclusion rates

Report by David Cosgrove

INCONSISTENT teaching and above-average fixed-term exclusions at a secondary school has seen it rated as 'requiring improvement' by inspectors.

Philip Shackleton, headteacher at Oldbury Academy, which has 1,568 pupils, said he was 'slightly disappointed' with the result.

Inspectors also ranked the school 'good' in sub-categories for personal development, behaviour and welfare, as well as its 16 to 19 study programmes.

But education watchdog Ofsted said it required improvement for effectiveness of leadership and management, its quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and its outcomes for pupils.

The report states: "The quality of teaching in the school is improving, but continues to vary across subjects. Historically, teaching has not enabled pupils to make the progress of which they are capable in some subjects.

Robust

"Leaders' evaluation of the school's overall performance is too generous because it focuses overly on the positive changes that have occurred since September 2017.

"Leaders do not focus enough on pupils' achievement and progress from individual starting points."

Inspectors also said that the number of fixed-term exclusions was 'above national averages,' adding: "Leaders are aware of this and have robust action plans in place to reduce exclusions."

The school's strengths were also highlighted in the report.

It added: "Since September, the headteacher, supported by a restructured and capable leadership team, has accelerated the pace of improvement. This has been supported by the successful recruitment of high-quality teaching staff and leaders.

"The sixth form is good. Progress for academic subjects improved in 2017.

"Pupils are very well cared for at the school and their behaviour is good."

Mr Shackleton said: "Ofsted judged our academy to still require improvement.

"We are slightly disappointed with the judgement given the strides our school has made over the last two years, but we understand the journey we are on."

All White for pupils' business advice

James White, who visited Grace Academy to talk to pupils about business. From top to bottom, Codie Harris, Demi Bagnall and Ellie Dabrowski

HE used to present his ideas to the likes of business mogul Lord Alan Sugar and co. But now the BBC star has had to get used to a new audience – the pupils of Grace Academy in Darlaston.

Apprentice ace James White, who was joint winner of the show with Sarah Lynn in 2017, delivered 'inspiring' workshops to a host of students. The Birmingham entrepreneur also gave a Q&A session to the year 10, 12, and 13 students who took the opportunity to 'grill' the 26-year-old.

A statement from the academy said: "What a privilege to have one of the BBC Apprentice's most recent winners, James White, with us delivering inspiring workshops and Q&A sessions to our Year 10, 12, and 13 students.

"They had the chance to grill James about his ambitions, challenges and experiences in business, and glean some valuable insight into what it takes to be successful in the working world."

Following the win on December 17, James has been busy running his recruitment firm Right Time Recruitment based in Aston Cross, Birmingham. The firm Right Time Recruitment, which began in 2016, focuses on the UK's IT and infrastructure professionals and looks to help candidates achieve the right career move.

University chief voted out over pay dispute

A CONTROVERSIAL university vice-chancellor who grew up in the Black Country has been urged to step down immediately.

Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell is the UK's highest paid vice-chancellor and reportedly received £475,000 in salary and benefits from the University of Bath last year.

Amid a row about her pay, the organisation that oversees the university has voted for her immediate departure.

Dame Glynis, who is originally from West Bromwich, has said she would step down this summer – and then take a sabbatical on full pay until retiring next February.

However, the university's 'court', which has about 200 members, has voted that she should leave straight away. At a meeting, it passed a motion expressing no confidence in former Sandwell schoolgirl Dame Glynis, who is also the chair of the university's council and the remuneration committee.

It called for all to stand down immediately, as well as expressing that the council went beyond its powers by granting Dame Glynis a six-month sabbatical. Dame Glynis's university-provided accommodation should be counted in her pay, it agreed.

Hundreds of students, accompanied by members of staff, marched at the university in November in protest at Dame Glynis' retirement terms.

Last year, HEFCA announced they were making inquiries into Dame Glynis's retirement terms, following a letter from Labour councillor Joe Rayment.

Coca-Cola chief pays for a place

THE CEO of Coca-Cola has paid for a new school place worth £90,000 at his former school to help a Year 7 pupil start in September.

James Quincey, who attended King Edward's School in Birmingham during the late 70s and early 80s, visited the school where he gave a speech about his career.

He said: "Upon visiting my old school I was deeply impressed by the social and ethnic diversity of the boys at KES, and the curiosity and sense of character they demonstrated during my Q&A.

"It is clear that supporting Assisted Places enables boys from all walks of life to benefit from an outstanding education."

Dr Mark Fenton, chief master of King Edward's School, said: "I am incredibly grateful to James."

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Invitation to sing with top Midlands choral group

SINGERS are invited to rehearse with one of the West Midlands' leading choirs.

As part of Birmingham Bach Choir's annual Come And Sing! event celebrated conductor Paul Spicer helps singers explore choruses from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's rousing and mournful Requiem In D Minor.

It is on February 10 at Selly Oak Methodist Church.

Requiem was commissioned in 1791, the same year Mozart completed his famed opera The Magic Flute and the same year he died, at the age of just 35. Though the work wasn't fully completed by the composer at the time of his death, incomplete parts were finished by his student Süssmayr.

Established in 1919, Birmingham Bach Choir is one of the West Midlands' oldest and most distinguished groups. Regularly performing at major concert venues their repertoire spans works from great composers, to contemporary and modern pieces.

Chairman Sarah Platt said: "Our annual Come And Sing! is one of the most popular events in our calendar."

The workshop, which includes an informal concert performance of the whole work, takes place from 2pm. Tickets cost £14 – or £16 with music hire, including tea and cakes. Details and bookings can be made at www.birmingham.bachchoir.com

Medical testing centre launched

A NEW medical devices testing centre has officially opened in Birmingham.

The Medical Devices Testing and Evaluation Centre (MD-TEC) is housed on the third floor the Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital site.

Its launch last Wednesday featured a tour of the facilities and talks by key staff members, including a keynote speech by West Midlands mayor Andy Street, as well as an introductory speech by the Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, Chair of University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr Tom Clutton-Brock, ITM deputy director, said: "The new centre promises to be a game changer, in ensuring medical devices are fit for purpose and successfully reach market faster."

Vets offer help

A VETS is inviting pet rescue charities, community organisations and schools to apply for help from its team of staff. Ten members from White Cross Vets in Tividale will donate their time and skills to good causes free of charge. Call 01384 884 141.

Bethan embarks on mercy mission

Bethan Downing with youngsters

A KIND-hearted NHS worker is devoting her time to helping patients and children in India during a three-week long volunteering project.

Bethan Downing, deputy director of organisational development and learning at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBH), has flown to New Delhi where she is able to see first-hand how healthcare services are run.

She will use her skills to support a doctor at a clinic, which serves more than 100 patients, and will also visit a few orphanages. The mother-of-one, from Oldbury, hopes to pass on what she learns to colleagues at SWBH, which runs Sandwell, City and Rowley Regis Hospitals

Before embarking on her trip, Bethan, aged 39, said: "After my daughter turned 18 last year, I decided that it was the right time for me to focus on my personal goals. So I organised the trip through the company Plan My Gap Year Foundation. I am really looking forward to it."

Bethan will also be spending time atorphanages in Faridabad – a city just south of New Delhi – and has been busy fundraising to buy gifts for the youngsters.

She said: "I wanted to make sure I could take them something and have bought colouring books and toys for them already. I am looking forward to spending time with the children and helping them with their homework or just playing with them."

Bethan, who flew out to India on January 6, will be sharing her journey via https://twitter.com/downing_bethan. To donate go to https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bethan-downing1.

20mph speed limit will look to curb accidents

EIGHTY streets in Sandwell will see a 20mph speed limit introduced – including a road where a 30-year-old man died in a crash.

Sandwell Council is bringing in the measure across the streets – including Hamstead Road in Great Barr where Deepak Riat lost control of his BMW and collided with a double-decker bus.

Now Sandwell Council bosses have introduced the limit as part of an ongoing review of road safety on residential estates with schools – with council leader Steve Eling saying casualties and fatalities will be 'much reduced'.

Councillor Eling said: "They are being done in batches and it is a road safety measure.

"The casualties and deaths at 20mph, particularly with children and other vulnerable people, and the fatalities at 20mph are much reduced along with other injuries.

"People persistently call for reduced speed limits and in days gone by people have called for road humps all over the place – it has just sort of moved on from that.

Maniacs

"It is a reminder for people to slow down and it responds to residents' concerns about the speed of traffic on roads.

"The view is it has reduced speed amongst most people – clearly you still get maniacs but you are always going to have maniacs whatever the speed limit.

"If you can reduce the speed of traffic it has proved statistically you have fewer accidents. If something does occur the impact of it is far less."

It comes as the leader previously said that there had been a 'significant demand' for a 20mph speed limit on residential streets.

He said there had been a big demand for the limit to be sanctioned and that if it stopped children being injured or killed the move would be worth doing.

The move has been widely backed, according to one other councillor, who says everybody the council have spoken to wanted the scheme to go ahead.

Birthday joy for 102-year-old Annie

Annie Overton celebrates with son Paul and health care assistant Sophie Parkins at the Tipton care home

FAMILY, friends and staff all stepped in to give 102-year-old Annie Overton a special birthday.

It was all smiles as balloons, birthday banners, a cake and champagne were brought in to the Veronica Care Home in Leabrook Road, Tipton, to mark the occasion. Son Paul Overton, aged 72, said he was 'very proud' of his mother who he described as a 'special lady'.

Mr Overton, an architectural surveyor, said: "We all had a wonderful time. We did have a lovely day and the home is wonderful – they provided a cake, balloons and champagne.

"She has always had a very resilient character. It is a wonderful history I am very proud of her. She is such a stoic and a very special lady."

Daughter to chainmaker parents Annie Laura and Caleb Smith – Annie Overton spent the first part of her life in Cradley Heath.

She was born in 1916, midway through the First World War, and was the third of 13 children.

Her mother and father made small chains at the back of the family home in Corngreaves Road, Cradley Heath.

The 102-year-old, who suffered ill health as a child, worked at Parker and Osborn glass mirror manufacturers in Birmingham where she met her late husband John Overton, known as Jack.

The pair had married at Rowley Church in 1940 and their only child Paul was born at the end of the war in October 1945.

Annie was widowed in 1979 when Jack died, aged just 64, of a stroke.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parking concern sparks petition

A PETITION has been launched to revoke parking charges and also to restrict lorries parking overnight on a Wednesbury road.

A total of 54 residents have signed the petition relating to Albert Street, which is located behind Wednesbury Town Hall and Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery.

The petition is aiming to address overnight HGV parking which causes problems to road safety and damage to footpaths.

It has been backed by Wednesbury South Ward councillor Pam Hughes, who said: "It will help trade in the area."

M5 work on track for finish in 2019

A MOTORWAY roadworks scheme, which has caused major disruption, remains on track to be completed early next year, roads bosses have said.

The project between Junctions 1 and 2 of the M5, between West Bromwich and Oldbury, has seen the motorway cut down to two lanes of traffic in either direction and a 30mph speed limit imposed, leading to long delays.

Highways England confirmed the contraflow should end in the autumn.

The stretch of the motorway is now expected to finally return to normal in spring 2019.

Night in Brum for iconic comedian

HOLLYWOOD comedy icon Rob Schneider is coming to Birmingham.

The Emmy-Award winning actor, comedian and screenwriter brings his one-man show to the Second City's Asylum venue on March 16.

The Californian star, who first came to prominence on Saturday Night Live, has starred in films such as Grown Ups, Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo, You Don't Mess With The Zohan, Big Daddy, Judge Dredd and The Beverly Hillbillies. He also created and stars in the docu-series Real Rob.

See www.theasylumvenue.co.uk

Artist's exhibition inspired by mother

AN art exhibition launches in Birmingham this March.

Artist Belles Petite, aka Claire Griffiths' exhibition is titled Because of You and is inspired by Claire's mother Margaret Rose, who recently lost her battle with cancer. The artist is hoping to raise money for cancer charity Macmillan on Saturday, March 17.

The event takes place at Zellig, Gibb Street from 5pm to 10pm and will feature live music and more.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Carrier bag charge is a pain on the pocket

IF THE comments by the chattering classes over the past few days are to be believed, one might be forgiven for thinking that the 5p charge on carrier bags has been an unparalleled success, rivalled only by sliced bread.

Maybe it's just me, but when I go to the supermarket checkout, I don't feel a sense of awe at the genius of those behind the scheme. I just feel discomfort as I stuff a packet of frozen peas in my trouser pocket because yet again I've left my bags in the car.

What is interesting is that I've just read that these "bags for life", which the do-gooders keep banging on about, are not quite as green as they would have us believe.

Recent research says they actually cause 175 times more damage to the environment than the conventional "throw away" ones. And let's be honest, did anybody actually thrown them away after using them just once? I've still got old bags dating back from the 1980s, which are used to store old newspapers and magazines.

Indeed, another statistic is that plastic shopping bags account for just 0.2 per cent of household waste, but I suppose we can't let the fact get in the way of a bit of virtue signalling.

But here's another thought, if plastic is so bad, instead of charging us 5p or 10p for our bags, why don't they just give us free paper bags like they used to? These could go in the recycling with our old newspapers, and everyone's a winner.

Anyhow, that argument seems to have been lost, and plastic-free aisles are about to become the next big thing. In five years time those shrink-wrapped apples and grapes will probably become as obsolete as ration books.

Sounds fair enough on paper, but I do wonder if anybody actually took the trouble to ask the supermarkets why they sell fruit and veg in plastic packaging to begin with.

Because an industry insider tells me it is not because supermarkets get some perverse pleasure out of wasting money or trying to destroy the planet. It is because the packaging has been carefully designed to make the produce last longer, in order to reduce waste.

So we might save on a bit of plastic here and there, but end up throwing away tons of perfectly good fruit and veg. And of course, when people do select the fruit and veg from the plastic-free aisle, they will put it into plastic bags.

Still, got to be seen to do something, haven't we?

Farewell to a legendary broadcaster, Ed Doolan

The passing of Ed Doolan, a broadcaster who never shied from telling it how it is

Donald Trump – not the first US President to have his intellect brought into question

Penelope Keith as Margo in The Good Life, a role which she will never shake off

Wheel be careful, driving in the city

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

ACCORDING to new data, it is harder to pass your driving test in Wolverhampton than in most other parts of the country. Which poses an obvious question: how many drivers in Wolverhampton actually bother to take the test?

WHEREVER you drive in Britain you will witness occasional incidents of carelessness and inattention. But Wolverhampton is the only place where I've seen a driver with a plate on his lap eating a meat pie with a knife and fork, at the traffic lights. It takes a brave cop to come between a Black Country man and his pasty.

SO farewell, Ed Doolan, the veteran BBC broadcaster who died last week. Always good listening, always wise company, Doolan believed there was less evil in the world than some people seemed to think, and that when life seems to conspire against us, it's probably just a cock-up. As he told me nearly 20 years ago: "Never put down to malice anything you can put down to stupidity. It's usually something that's gone wrong or some jobsworth throwing his weight around on a bad morning."

DOOLAN is generally described as a champion of the underdog. But some underdogs strained his patience. I remember a caller to his Radio WM show complaining that there was a gap in her fence and her kids were getting out and playing by the road. "You get a hammer, some nails and some wood,"said Doolan, "and you fix the hole." He repeated this patiently, word for word, several times until the protesting caller got the message and hung up. "Ah, the dependency culture," sighed Doolan. He had a soft heart but was never a soft touch.

A READER, who apparently wishes half the population dead, writes: "When the current batch of Little Englanders are pushing up the daisies, the young people of today will be in charge and will reapply to join the EU." Splendid. I have taken the liberty of drafting the question for the 2040 EU Referendum voting form: "Hey, kids, would you like Britain to become one of the chief financiers and the military wing of the Great European Empire, now embracing Turkey and Albania and pushing its borders up against Russia and Syria? Or would you prefer Britain to remain the independent, peaceful and prosperous global trading nation it is now in 2040, controlling its own frontiers, respected throughout the world and acting as friend and honest broker to the USA, China, Russia and Europe?"

DONALD Trump is not the first US president to be mocked for his intellect, or lack of it. There was an unkind, and untrue, story of President George W Bush being horrified at a news report that three Brazilian soldiers had been killed in Iraq. "Remind me again," the president asked his aides. "How many is a brazillion?"

I WAS reminded of that tale by a letter in the Daily Telegraph this week suggesting a new name for any unimaginably large sum of money. Carillions.

NO matter how they package and rebrand her, Penelope Keith, currently presenting Village of the Year (C4), is forever Margo, the snifty, houseproud snob from The Good Life. And whichever village finally emerges as the winner in this oddly-conceived daytime show, I bet you won't be allowed to visit it until Margo has made you take off your muddy boots.

INCIDENTALLY, I see one of the shortlisted villages is my regular holiday haunt of Beer in Devon. Whatever Margo says, just stay away. You'd hate it. Really.

ONE of the claims made by a retired officer during the debate on army recruiting is that war is good for recruitment. I know of no official figures to support this but I do recall the steady stream of would-be heroes who turned up at my local TA drill hall in 1982 eager to join the colours and do their bit in the Falklands. Some were of the generation that just missed National Service when it was wound up in the 1960s. "I always felt I was cheated of something," one of them told me.

CHEATED? But of what? The great thing about National Service was the unknown. I knew two blokes who were called up in the 1950s. One spent his two years "counting blankets at Catterick," as he put it. The other spent it on Sunderland flying boats in the Far East. When people talk about bringing back National Service, they should tell us what sort of National Service they mean. Put me down for the Sunderlands.

PETER Rhodes will be speaking at Wolverhampton Literature Festival on Sunday, January 28. See: http://www.wolvesliteraturefestival.co.uk/peter-rhodes/4594118684

TALKING POINT

Struggling to keep those new year goals

'Less is more' was the theme when it came to making my 2018 New Year resolutions. As the clock chimed 12 I determined I would eat and spend less and not swear so much.

Come December 31 2018 there will be a slimline, more ladylike me with more available funds in my purse and a not-so stressed credit card.

The only 'more' I was allowing myself was with reading, in the hope this lead to greater relaxation.

But a little early research proved a tad disheartening. Statistics show that only eight per cent of people actually stick to their resolutions, with losing weight and spending less the most common goals.

However, in retrospect, the first month of the year is not a good time to make such resolutions.

For example, the 25 per cent of us who have resolved to spend less forgot one great obstacle – the January sales. The four-letter word is emblazoned over every shop and supermarket window tormenting us, pulling at our purse strings.

Not only did I trawl the rails and racks of every high street fashion shop, I bought a three-piece suite. It was half price, though, and I don't have to start paying for a year so does that actually count as a fail? Then there is the challenge for the 32 per cent of us determined to eat less. Firstly, the cupboards are still full of all the extra food shipped in for Christmas, exasperated by the selection of chocolates and sweets Santa popped in your stocking.

All this food can't just be allowed to get to waste. And, as we are in the throes of winter, our bodies demand we eat more to protect against the weather, it's like hibernation. I am genetically programmed to fail on this resolution.

No excuses for not curbing my foul mouth though. Despite the provocation of some frankly appalling drivers who would thoroughly deserve the unladylike profanities, this is achievable. However, at 20p a time per curse it is further compounding my failure to spend less.

Success, so far, however on the reading, thanks to a small library of Christmas gift books and an unwillingness to break away from the fire and venture out on a cold, dark evening.

This would achieve the aim of being more relaxed if I wasn't so worried about how much I was spending on a new sofa, all the calories I had consumed to make a dent in the food mountain and how much the journey on the M6 had benefitted the swear jar. But I remain convinced that less is more – next year I will make fewer resolutions.

DIANE DAVIES

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Failing NHS is not a political problem

I AM becoming a very annoyed at the NHS being used as a political whipping boy by people like Reg Vernon.

No party of any colour is responsible for the present state of the health service. It is not a political problem, but one of circumstance. The predicament is caused by the vast increase in population since its inception and the great advances made in medicine in the last 50 years which has led to the amelioration of many diseases. This has led to a population living far longer than our predecessors manifestly increasing patient demand.

He also appears to be blaming the choice of vaccine on the Government but he must know full well that deciding which vaccine to promote is always a calculated guess every year, and has proved to be the wrong decision many times in the past. On one point I am in agreement with him.

The building of new hospitals with a reduced number of beds is wrong and this is not a recent decision, but is a mistake made by all governments in recent years. Also the closing of smaller local hospitals where the 'bed blockers' could be accommodated with a small number of staff thus enabling places in the larger units to be freed up. As regards funding, Labour while in office for many years threw vast sums of money at the NHS which made no impact because at the same time they vastly increased 'the management'. In the early days of the NHS, a sister, an almoner and a handful of staff ran most hospitals efficiently whereas today management more often outnumber the frontline doctors and nurses doing the 'real work'.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
Great Barr

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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ipso. For press freedom with responsibility

Schooldays changing for better?

IN recent years I have written about my autism, diagnosed just shy of age 60, seven years ago. Undiagnosed, I was socially uneasy in my own comfort zone, which explains why a teacher hit me in 1962 for not answering quickly enough.

I explained that the change from junior to senior school puts new demands on the brain: being good at mental arithmetic which I can do in my head, does not mean I am good at algebra; being good at English which is my native tongue does not mean I can learn Latin or French. In addition, peer pressure changes as well.

Now teachers acknowledge that moving from junior to senior school may impose pressure with social media. Again, I suppose being good at hop scotch does not mean you understand Wi Fi.

Well, I hope today's kids get more support from Sir, than did I in 1962.

ROBERT WHITE
Wigmore

No opposition as May loses her way

OVER the past weeks we have seen Theresa May's government crumble like an old school pudding. Ministers resign, allegations of improper conduct, pornography and fall-outs. Her hesitancy over Brexit is embarrassing.

Cancer treatment withheld over funds, A&E waiting times almost at a peak, operations cancelled, so you would expect the opposition to be making deep inroads, when we would anticipate Labour to bang on about her failings.

I really don't think Mrs May is anything of a leader, arrogantly trying to pull a fast one with the public in a snap election. Where is the opposition to hold her to account? Why isn't her government being kept on their toes; our flat footed May has her slippers on.

SHAUN HARRISON
West Bromwich

Blair's out of touch in Brexit calls

FOR a supposedly savvy politician, Tony Blair's attempts to undermine Brexit simply show that he has lost touch with political reality.

The tectonic plates have shifted. The onus is upon those who would remain in the EU to explain what that would look like. To suppose we can just slip back into the EU as if nothing has happened is absurd.

Why would anyone in their right mind want to listen to, or take note, of anything said by Tony Blair, an individual whose leadership was questioned by many during, and certainly after, his time in No 10? He is clearly an EU supporter who now suggests the British public should stand firm for another vote on Brexit. The man has clearly 'lost the plot'.

The country held a referendum and the vote was 'Out'. He, and those like him, should stop bleating and simply get on with it.

ALAN DAVIS
Darlaston

MP urges work to continue on Midland Met Hospital

A MP has urged the Government to 'get money flowing' so that workers can get back on site of the £350 million Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick following the collapse of construction giant Carillion.

John Spellar, MP for Warley, said that the 'super hospital' – which is set to be complete by spring next year – could not be left as a 'monument to incompetence'.

Report by Clare Butler

The politician also warned the Government that workers would start to find jobs elsewhere unless funding was freed and teams pulled back on site.

It was announced that banks would be taking 'emergency measures' to support sub-contractors caught up in the Carillion collapse.

Mr Spellar said: "The big message today is to get the site working and get the money flowing.

"This cannot be left as a monument to incompetence – we need the Government to free up the funding and send out the message that they can pull their teams back together. If this doesn't happen soon then people will start to find posts elsewhere.

"This is a clear message to the Government that this will end up costing a lot more money the longer it is left."

The opening of the Midland Met, which will replace Sandwell General as the main hospital in the borough, has already been delayed by at least six months to spring 2019, due to engineering problems.

It is set to have around 700 beds and 15 operation theatres.

It will provide maternity, children's and inpatient adult services to an estimated half a million people.

Speaking about the delays already racked up on the build, Mr Spellar added: "It was a sign of failures on Carillion's part. There were ventilation problems among other things but they got resolved in the end.

"The plant has been largely built and they were back on track so it is deeply disappointing that this has happened."

In a statement earlier this week, Toby Lewis, chief executive of Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, said they were 'working closely' with HM Treasury and The Hospital Company to ensure 'alternative arrangements' were put in place so that the construction of the hospital was completed.

Mr Spellar visited the site in Cranford Street, Smethwick last Thursday, to find cranes at a standstill.

Carillion was involved in a range of construction and infrastructure projects in the UK from new rail lines and electrification, to road widening and bypass schemes, as well as building two major new hospitals and a city centre redevelopment.

About 40 per cent of Carillion's revenue in 2016 was from construction projects both in the UK and overseas.

Most of the rest of the company's revenue came from public sector contracts, such as maintaining, cleaning and supplying meals for schools, prisons and hospitals.

John Spellar MP at the Midland Metropolitan Hospital site in Cranford Street, Smethwick

Tipton's team raises £3.35k for charity

THE fundraising efforts of staff from Tipton and Coseley Building Society helped raise more than £3,350 last year for the UK's leading dementia support and research charity.

The Tipton's staff charity committee voted to support Alzheimer's Society throughout 2017.

Fundraising initiatives included the Memory Walk, The Great Tipton Bake Off and The Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100.

Lee Allen, Alzheimer's Society's services manager for Wolverhampton and Walsall, said: "Alzheimer's Society has a significant role to play in supporting not only those with dementia but also their families and carers.

"We rely on the generosity of individuals and companies like Tipton & Coseley Building Society to enable our charity to continue its work.

"We are really grateful for their support."

Sally Coombes from the Tipton added: "I'd like to thank our staff for their commitment in raising such a huge amount for Alzheimer's Society.

"Our donation will make a huge difference to the people the charity cares for across the region."

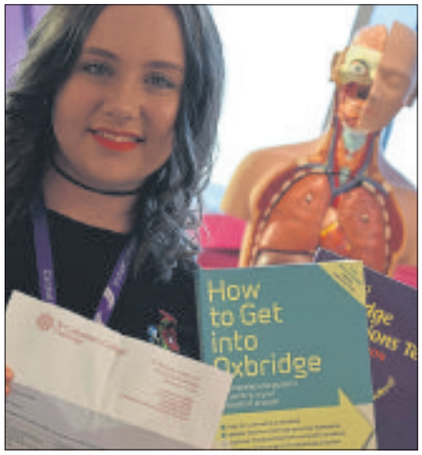
Manufacturer's newcomer award

A MANUFACTURING firm in Birmingham has won a national apprentice award, citing them as the best newcomer of last year.

Lander Automotive Ltd, based at Woodgate Business Park, was awarded Newcomer SME Employer of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards at a ceremony at London's Grosvenor House last week.

Lander Automotive Ltd took the top prize thanks to their large-scale apprenticeship programme.

Joy for Lauren on her way to Cambridge



Sandwell College student Lauren Brant, aged 17, who has been offered a place at Cambridge university

A TALENTED Sandwell College student is overjoyed at being offered a place at Cambridge University.

Lauren Brant, aged 17, is hoping to study Psychological and Behavioural Sciences at St Catharine's College, subject to gaining A*AA in her Biology, Psychology and Sociology A Levels at Central Sixth.

After a nail-biting wait to check her emails, while she sat three mock exams in a row, Lauren finally got the fantastic news. She said: "It still hasn't sunk in. My initial reaction was to tell anyone who would listen. I was in a state of disbelief when I saw the email. I'm the first on my mom's side to go to university at all."

Lauren has been preparing for Oxbridge from the time she was at Brownhills School. "Cambridge has always been a dream of mine. It's surreal to actually get there and think it's not out of your reach," she said.

Lauren has worked part-time in a retail store and as a mental health mentor for a charity, and she hopes to continue her studies with a doctorate after her degree.

Central Sixth Director, Dr Matt Lamb, added: "This is wonderful news as Lauren is such a bright, able and pleasant student. We wish Lauren every success."

Gifts sent by 2 Sisters boss 'were rejected'

MPS investigating food safety breaches at chicken supplier 2 Sisters have revealed they rejected Christmas gifts sent from its boss.

By Peter Madeley

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee said festive packages of biscuits were sent to several members by Ranjit Singh Boparan, boss of the Black Country-based firm.

The committee chairman said the unsolicited gifts were 'inappropriate' and 'an unwarranted attempt to impugn the committee's impartiality', adding that they had been either returned or given to local food banks.

2 Sisters said the gifts were a 'goodwill gesture', which the company sent out to many external stakeholders. The committee held a month-long inquiry into the food group's actions after an undercover report claimed workers at its West Bromwich site were changing the slaughter dates to extend the shelf life of meat.

Mr Boparan subsequently apologised for the scandal and pledged to improve standards at the factory, increase training for his workforce and install cameras to monitor staff. The firm is one of the UK's largest chicken suppliers but it also provides biscuits, ready meals and frozen pizzas.

Over the Christmas period, several committee members received packages with a mixture of Fox's and other tins of biscuits.

Labour's Paul Flynn, who sits on the committee, said the package contained 'around £100 worth' of goodies.

But 2 Sisters says the total cost of the gift was around £20. Chairman Neil Parish, the Conservative MP for Tiverton and Honiton, said members had found the actions of Ranjit Singh Boparan, 'very disappointing'.

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Taxi driver guilty over refusing guide dog fare

A TAXI driver has been found guilty of refusing to drive a visually impaired man and his guide dog into Birmingham.

Abdul Khalik refused to take Jason Lane, his guide dog Crispin and two friends from Jason's home in Bearwood to the city centre on May 17.

They were on their way to celebrate Jason's mother's birthday with a meal and a show. Jason, aged 48, is registered blind after losing his sight 11 years ago. He said: "It was really frustrating. I had my 84-year-old mum waiting for me in Birmingham and the taxi was already late – then when he arrived, he literally just drove off. This law has been place for years and taxi drivers should know their responsibilities."

Jason said he regularly used the taxi company Premier Cars in Langley and had never had a problem before.

Taxi driver Khalik, aged 42 of Crompton Road, Handsworth, defended himself through an interpreter at Walsall Magistrates Court, last Tuesday.

Khalik denied refusing to have an assistance dog in his car but claimed he was both allergic and frightened of dogs, though he did not have an exemption certificate which would allow him to legally decline to carry an assistance dog. He claimed he didn't want the dog to sit in the front and that he drove away as there was a car behind him that couldn't get past.

Khalik was found guilty of failure/refusal to carry out a booking made by a disabled person accompanied by an assistance dog. He was given a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay Sandwell Council's £1,030 costs plus a £20 victim surcharge.

Sandwell public health chief, Elaine Costigan said: "I'd like to thank Jason and his friend David for being very good witnesses and also Premier Cars who fully cooperated with our taxi licensing team."

Knight makes it a big day

Beverley Knight, seated right, with other cast members during the day

PANTO stars including Black Country soul singer Beverley Knight have been hailed by a Midlands hospice.

Two of Birmingham Hippodrome's supporters have helped fund the compact folding mobile hoist allowing it to welcome even more visitors with accessibility needs.

Acorns Hospice thanked them for their generosity and also highlighted the support of Beverley and her fellow cast members from Cinderella on a family day at the theatre. Acorns Hospice wrote on Twitter: "We're so grateful to the @brumhippodrome and the regular supporters whose generosity has allowed the theatre to install a hoist."

Rachael Magson, head of fundraising said: "It is important to us that everyone has access to the great facilities, workshops and theatre performances we have on offer here. We value the relationship with Acorns Children's Hospice over the past three years and this helped us to identify the need for our own hoist."

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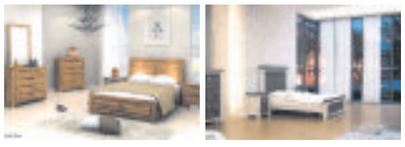

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The company, which is based in Halesowen, can also assist with repairs and maintenance problems with your current windows, doors and conservatories regardless of who originally fitted them.

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"All installations are fully supervised from initial design through to final installation by expert Rydale operatives," added the company spokesman.

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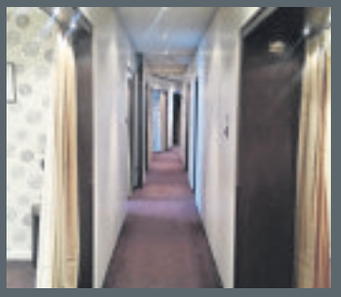

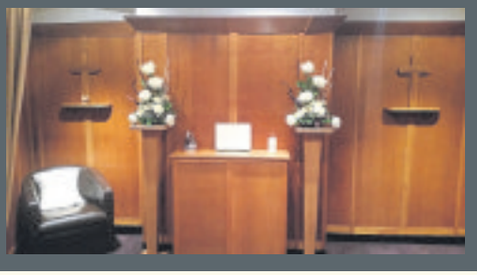
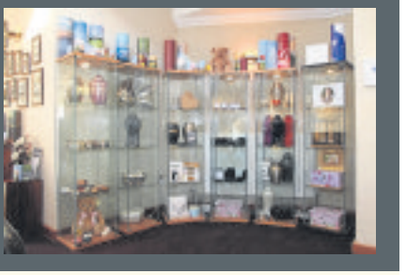

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Youngsters warned after bike ride ends in tragedy

Kian Buckler, aged 15

A CRASH investigation expert has warned young people to stay off motorbikes ridden illegally following the death of a teenager.

By Alex Ross

Kian Buckler, aged 15, died after the stolen bike he was riding passenger on smashed into a car in Bilston.

The bike rider, Brett Everitt, 16, was locked up in detention after pleading guilty to causing death by dangerous driving.

Everitt, of Thompson Road in Oldbury, was riding the bike in the middle of the road when it hit a car on November 29 at 6.30pm.

The bike had no headlights, and both Everitt and Kian had no helmets or reflective clothing.

Everitt will now serve five years' detention in a youth offenders institute and has been banned from driving for five and a half years, following sentencing at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Sgt Paul Hughes from West Midland Police's collision investigation unit, said: "This is a tragic case in which two young lives have been ruined…it once again highlights the risks involved with young people riding motorcycles in a dangerous and reckless manner.

"Everitt chose to do this without any regard for himself or other road users and ultimately caused the death of his friend Kian Buckler. He will have to live with the consequences of his actions for the rest of his life."

The crash took place on Lunt Road at the junction with Boswell Road. The driver of the car was disqualified driver Jamaine Lindo. The 37-year-old, of Lunt Road, was jailed for eight weeks for driving whilst disqualified, without insurance and failing to stop at the incident.

Reporting restrictions were lifted on identifying Everitt following an application by the Chronicle's sister paper, the Express & Star.

The youth also pleaded guilty to driving without a licence, insurance failing to provide a blood test, but there was no separate penalty for each offence.

Brett Everitt

City university chiefs sign deal with the Chinese

A PAIR of new education programmes for Chinese students have been launched at the University of Birmingham.

The university's Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir David Eastwood welcomed a delegation of Chinese academics recently, where he signed an agreement with the president of the University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB).

Sir David also presented Professor ZHANG with an Honorary Professorship as part of the visit.

The new study opportunities are an MSc programme in Thermal Energy & Power Engineering and an undergraduate programme in Mechanical Engineering.

Professor Sir David Eastwood said: "We are delighted to be working with our colleagues at USTB to develop education opportunities that benefit students in China and allow the University of Birmingham to make a contribution to Chinese society.

"As a global 'civic' university in the 21st century, our responsibilities include contributing to enriching the life of both our home city and the wider world. These study programmes further strengthen our relationship with USTB and represent another exciting opportunity to foster academic partnerships across the globe."

Wood you believe it? As Bernard turns 100

Bernard Colechin, 100, in his woodwork class with tutor Jim Ault, daughter Janette Colechin, and fellow woodworkers

HE may have just turned 100 but Bernard Colechin is carving out a new path as a keen woodworker.

A former naval officer during the Second World War, now Mr Colechin loves nothing better than a spot of whittling on his woodwork class in Halesowen.

And he was delighted to receive a cake on his 100th decorated with woodworking tools along with his card from the Queen. Mr Colechin, who lives in Kinver, was a minesweeper in the Second World War.

As a young man in 1938 he got the call up to sweep mines from Dover and was later mentioned in dispatches for his distinguished service. Serving in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves he lost many of his comrades whilst sweeping mines on the HMS BYMS 2080. His daughter Jeanette Colechin, 68, said: "He was a minesweeper and he also swept Hong Kong harbour when that was taken from the Japanese – when they were booted out he swept the harbour and made it safe for our ships."

The lieutenant commander had spent six months training on HMS Ganges, six months sea training on HMS Cossack and then six months training on HMS King Alfred in Brighton – the officer training establishment.

Eventually, Bernard went to Australia and Hong Kong to sweep mines and was there until 1947. He returned to Margate in Kent and later took on a whole host of roles, including as manager at consumer goods company Unilever – which brought him to the Midlands in 1950s.

The woodworking group, which meets at Leasowes High School, has seen Mr Colechin working on a whole host of projects over the last 14 years. He said: "It is a very interesting way of passing the time. If you have 10 years of war you do not really worry too much about what is happening today – war solves nothing."

Ava's top of the chops for charity

A KIND-HEARTED girl from West Bromwich cut 12 inches off her hair for charity.

Ava Katrina Kohli, aged eight, donated her locks to the Little Princess Trust after having the chop on January 12.

Over the weeks she has been raising money for the charity from her family, friends and school reaching more than £500.

Mother, Kim Kohli, said: "Ava is a girly girl and loved her long hair like all princess however it was getting too long for her to handle and felt like it was the right time to give it away.

"So last year we researched the Little Princess Trust which provided real hair wigs to children all over England and Ireland.

"Ava decided to give her hair to those children to provide them with happiness, comfort and confidence.

"As parents we are so proud of her decision and that she is very brave to do what she doing at her age.

We could not think of better way for her to donate her

Ava Katrina Kohli, seen with the hair she had cut off

Chiefs in smear tests call after figures fall

WOMEN in Sandwell are being reminded of the importance of attending regular smear tests for cervical cancer.

It comes as latest figures reveal that attendance of cervical screening in England is the lowest for two decades.

NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Sandwell Council are supporting the #SmearForSmear 2018 campaign, which runs from January 22-28 during Cervical Cancer Prevention Week.

More women per 100,000 in Sandwell die from cervical cancer than in the West Midlands and England. Currently West Bromwich has the lowest coverage rates for women screened for cervical cancer across Sandwell – the rate is much lower than recommended levels of 80 per cent.

Only 59 per cent of women aged 25-49 have been screened in the last three years compared with 74 per cent of those aged 50-64 in the last five years. Rates are particularly poor for women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, those living in areas of high deprivation and migrant women, particularly Polish and Romanian and other Eastern Europeans.

It has been estimated that cervical screening saves around 4,500 lives in the UK each year. Women aged 25 to 49 are invited for cervical screening, also known as a smear test, every three years. After that, women are invited every five years until the age of 64. Since the introduction of cervical screening in the 1980s, the number of cervical cancer cases has decreased by about seven per cent each year.

For younger women, HPV vaccinations can help prevent seven out of 10 cervical cancers, and these are routinely given to girls across the country aged 12 and 13. This is a vaccination against the persistent human papillomavirus (HPV) infection that causes changes to the cervical cells and is responsible for nearly all cervical cancers. It is important that women who had the HPV vaccine when they were 12 or 13, still need to have cervical screening.

Dr Nick Harding, Chair of NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, said:"We are urging all women between the ages of 25 and 64 to go to their GP practice for their smear test. This is vital as early-stage cervical cancers don't usually have symptoms and are generally detected through screening."

For more information on #SmearForSmear 2018 visit https://www.jostrust.org.uk/

1,000 jobs hope with industrial development

WORK is due to start in the coming days on a multi-million pound industrial development in Tipton that could help deliver a major jobs boost for the Black Country.

It comes more than a year after developer CEG secured planning permission from Sandwell Council for its ambitious £32 million scheme to overhaul the historic Vaughan Trading Estate in Tipton, creating up to 1,000 jobs.

Another 200 will be created by the building work. The scheme involves flattening most of the existing buildings on land neighbouring the Thomas Dudley foundry and CAB Autos factory. The start of work comes at a time when top quality industrial and warehouse space is in short supply. Developer CEG aims to create up to 500,000 sq feet of space at Vaughan Park.

Permission

Work on the first phase is set to commence shortly.

CEG secured planning permission for the regeneration of the historic 28 acre site in September 2016 and is now managing the speculative development of the first phase of units. This first phase will offer up to five units totalling 80,000 sq ft and CEG says it will be ready for occupation later this year.

Further 'design and build' opportunities of between 5,000 and 200,000 sq ft are also available on the site.

Lawrence Escott, investment manager at CEG said: "This is a buoyant West Midlands commercial location, benefitting from exceptional transport links and a large, skilled workforce.

"There is a significant lack of quality industrial floor space in the area and this first phase will deliver high quality space designed to meet the market demand from small to medium sized businesses."

CEG says the new factory and warehouse units will be built to "an unrivalled specification" with internal heights of eight metres (26ft), separate yards and parking in a well-landscaped environment. Environmentally friendly, they will have 24 hour security, CCTV and gatehouse entry.

CBRE and Bulleys have been appointed as agents to market the site.

Stuart Mair from CBRE said: "The increase in occupier demand across all size ranges in the West Midlands over the last few years has been prevalent.. The speculative construction of these high quality industrial and distribution units by CEG means that

An aerial artist's impression of Vaughan Park in Tipton

CGI of the multi-million pound speculative development by CEG

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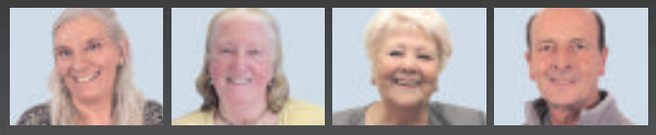

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SAVE 30% Was £995 — NOW ONLY £689 THE PAIR

TOTAL CLEARANCE PRICE
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SAVE 70% Was £149 — NOW ONLY £49 MATTRESS EXTRA

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THE CORONA RANGE OF BEDROOM FURNITURE

WEEKEND SPECIAL DEAL
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Triple 3 Door Wardrobe	£249
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The Clio Memory Foam Superb Quality Complete Full Double Size Beds

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The Balmoral Extending Table Super Oak + 4 Matching Chairs CRAZY PRICE

SAVE 70% Was £599 — NOW £249

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Warning over ice after car hits tree

The car which hit a tree

A CAR crashed into a wall and a tree in Rowley Regis, with firefighters warning of 'treacherous' conditions at the time, following the recent cold snap.

Crews from Oldbury attended the incident which took place in Portway Hill after the Nissan SUV left the road after getting into difficulties due to the ice and ended up wedged between the tree and wall.

The crash occurred at 10.43am on Sunday morning.

West Midlands Ambulance Service said five people were assessed by paramedics and all five were discharged at the scene with either minor or no injuries.

Oldbury Fire Station posted on Twitter: "Portway Hill in Rowley Regis is treacherous.

"Please drive carefully folks. #RTC #NotJustFires."

FOCUS ON OLDBURY

Family joins forces with developers on ventures

THE Black Country Richardson family has teamed up with a leading property developer on two new industrial warehouse schemes in Redditch and Kettering.

Oldbury-based Richardsons, which developed the Merry Hill complex, has formed a joint venture with Warwickshire's St Francis Group which also specialises in brownfield development and regeneration.

By John Corser

One of the projects is Velocity 42, a 20-acre site at Park Farm Industrial Estate, Redditch, on which 330,000 sq ft of industrial and warehouse space will be constructed in a range of sizes from 39,000 sq ft to 141,000 sq ft.

Work is to start this summer and be complete next year. The other is Cransley Park, a business park development on junction eight of the A14, Kettering, where 270,000 sq ft of industrial and warehouse space will be built in four units from 25,000 sq ft to 100,000 sq ft.

Work is expected to start this spring and complete early in 2019.

As part of the agreement St Francis has completed the sale of both sites to the Richardson family and the joint venture partnership will speculatively develop both schemes.The Richardson family is probably best known for the Merry Hill Shopping Centre in Brierley Hill, but the company's reach goes far wider than that with projects and joint ventures across Europe and North America.

One major Richardsons project is the regeneration of part of Durham's Riverside – Freemans Reach – which is the UK's first city centre development to use hydro power generation following the installation of a huge water turbine.

Richardson Capital is also transforming the Lowesmoor area of Worcester – all part of a £75 million regeneration scheme, with Carillion as a partner.

Richardsons has been developing real estate for six decades.

'One'... Asiatic Lion Jetpur with keeper Josh Luxton from Oldbury, during the count

Numbers game for zoo staff

STAFF at Dudley Zoo have had their clipboards at the ready, while taking part in the annual count of the attraction's inhabitants.

There are more than 1,600 animals on site covering 260 different species, says curator Richard Brown.

Once staff have a final figure, it will be put into the global Zoological Information Management System which is a global database. Dudley Zoo has a wide variety of animals, with the names of species beginning with 19 different letters of the alphabet.

From Asha the Asiatic lioness to Zeb the black and white ruffed lemur, all animals need to be counted during its annual stocktake.

The zoo has announced that work on a £250,000 extension of the Sumatran tiger enclosure begins in September.

Councillor hits out at hearing on conduct

OLDBURY councillor Mahboob Hussain has called for an independent investigation into Sandwell Council after branding a hearing into his conduct as 'farcical'.

Mr Hussain

The authority's former deputy leader could be ordered to attend training sessions following a council's ethics committee probe, which took place despite Mr Hussain being too unwell to attend.

The hearing, which was ordered by the High Court, found the Oldbury councillor had breached the members code of conduct by overseeing the sale of council land to his friend at a knock down price, and quashing parking tickets for family members.

Mr Hussain, who has always denied any wrongdoing, said that he was considering legal action over the probe, which is estimated to have cost the authority tens of thousands of pounds in legal fees. The committee is set decide Mr Hussain's punishment in the coming weeks.

Sandwell Council chief executive Jan Britton said: "The complaints made against Councillor Hussain under the Members' Code of Conduct were properly considered and determined. The full decision will be published shortly."

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Chronicle COLLECTIONS 2018

Jordans Solicitors

Ubhi's Kitchens

Sandwell Volunteers

Addison Tyres

Choice Cars

Stanley Road Chip Shop

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

Branching out to offer legal services across Black Country

JORDANS Solicitors provide legal services including Wills and Probate, Property and Family Law from our offices in Halesowen and Blackheath.

We cover Birmingham and the Black Country, including Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, West Bromwich and Stourbridge.

Jordans was established in Blackheath by John Jordan in 1990. Over the last five years we have trebled in size resulting in opening a second branch in Halesowen and we have three distinct departments, each headed by a specialist in that area.

Wills and Probate

For the majority of people, making a will is a simple and low cost iece of legal work.

On the other hand, the cost of sorting out the mess left when someone dies without a will, with an out of date will or with a badly drafted will can be massive.

It only takes an hour or so to make a will and it can save your loved ones hours of heartache and sometimes thousands of pounds.

Property Services

We deal with all types of transactions involving residential property: Sales, Purchases, Transfers of Equity and Remortgages.

Our focus is to provide an accessibleand efficient service to clients. Moving house can be very stressful and we aim to remove as much stress as possible for our clients.

Family Law

For all family clients we offer an initial FREE 30 minute interview to discuss your case, explain your options and advise you appropriately.

We are also able to offerthis service by a telephone appointment.

Whilst the majority of our workinvolves divorce, we also assist those who are cohabiting and those who are in a civil partnership.

For information please call our Halesowen office on 0121 5853900 or our Blackheath office on 0121 559 2922.

Other members of the team include Rikki Bateman and Emma Hingley. Rikki is a Qualified Solicitor specialising in Residential Property. He is vastly experienced in all aspects of buying and selling, including New Builds and Help to Buy Schemes.

Emma has joined us from a local Estate Agents.

She brings a wealth of experience, which will further improve the process of Buying or selling a property for our clients and make it a smoother and less stressful process.

Michael Jordan LLB Michael has been with the firm since 2006 when he joined as a trainee. He is now Managing Director specialising in Residential and Commercial Property.

Baldeep Kooner LLB Baldeep is a Wills and Probate Special ist advising on Wills, Probate, Powers of Attorney, Tax Planning and Court of Protection cases.

Brinder Khara LLB Brinder is an Accredited Family Solicitor and has been practising in the area of Family Law since 1996. She is also a Notary Public

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Offering the very latest designs at UBHI's Kitchens

Designs to suit all shapes and sizes of kitchens

Commercial feature

UBHI's Kitchens in Oldbury is celebrating 40 years in business, which is an amazing feat in this day and age.

The family-run concern puts its success down to commitment, listening to customer's needs and finding a solution to fit their budgets.

With kitchens made to order, a one-off or even a hinge, everyone and everything is catered for, you can also buy your appliances, worktops, etc separately.

For example a Hotpoint oven was £275, is now only £135; an integrated Hotpoint dishwasher was £495 now £250; or an Indesit double oven was £395, now an incredible £199.

It is easy to see why UBHI's Kitchens is a popular choice for the people of the West Midlands.

Amazing

The 40 per cent off, to mark their amazing achievement of 40 years is only for a limited time, so as this is the time of year when people think about holidays, getting the house done etc, you would be mad not to pop along or at least enquire about a quote. Visit the website: www.ubhikitchens.co.uk

Or ring 0121 557 7222, where the helpful staff will be more than happy to help with your enquiries or just even point you in the right direction.

The good news is that UBHI's Kitchens is also open to trade as well as the general public.

Any enquiries please phone or email ubhis@outlook.com for further assistance.

A stylish, almost futuristic kitchen, on display at Ubhi's Kitchens

Everything at your fingertips in this dream kitchen at the firm's Oldbury base

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KITCHENS & FURNITURE

40TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY, 40% OFF

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Hotpoint 90cm Range Cooker
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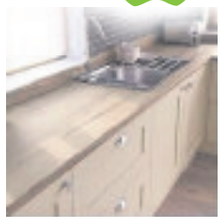

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Rewarding our local heroes

The Sandwell Volunteer Bi-annual Awards (now in their 7th year) aim to promote the positive contributions of individuals and groups and celebrate their achievements.

It is an opportunity to recognise people who have made a positive difference to their community and to society. Whilst volunteers give up their time with no expectation of reward, it is important that volunteer organisations thank volunteers for their dedication and contributions they have made.

On Saturday June 2, we will celebrate the achievement of our volunteers, when health & social care, community organisation, corporate, environmental and young volunteer awards will be presented. Further special awards will also go to a volunteer co-ordinator, a trustee and a volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution for 25 or more years.

The 2018 ceremony is set to be even more special as it marks the 40th anniversary of Volunteer Centre Sandwell (1978-2018) and also takes place during National Volunteers' Week which is June 1 to 7.

So, if you know an individual or a group whose contribution should be recognised, just fill in a nomination form and tell us why they deserve a Sandwell Volunteer Award! All those nominated for an award will receive a certificate, regardless of whether they are shortlisted for an award.

Categories for nominations are:

ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEER – A volunteer that has been active in helping to improve their local environment. This may involve picking up litter, painting, improving their local facilities in some way

The former Sandwell mayor Councillor Barbara Price with recipients of the Sandwell Volunteer Bi-annual Awards

CORPORATE VOLUNTEER – A volunteer from the statutory or commercial sector; someone that is instrumental in getting their organisation to give back

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE VOLUNTEER – A volunteer that has supported the health and wellbeing of others

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION – A volunteer or group of volunteers who have shown a great deal of community spirit. This could be taking part in a voluntary or community organisation or helping out in their community

YOUNG VOLUNTEER – A volunteer that is aged 25 or under

TRUSTEE – Trustees are volunteers who work together to uphold the mission and vision of the charity and to support the executive team in developing strategy

VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR – An individual who has made an outstanding contribution to levels and/or standards of volunteering

For further information or to become a Volunteer please contact us on 0121 544 8326 or visit our website www.volunteercentresandwell.org.uk.

Buckled alloy wheel repair specialists based in Tipton

Have you got a buckled wheel? No problem, at Addison Tyres they have a new technology machine used by trained professionals who can repair your alloy wheel and completely remove the buckle.

Addison Tyres are now offering this service to accident repair body shops, car sales, tyre centres and the general public across the Black Country area.

Technicians take the upmost care with all alloy wheels and ensure that every job is done right first time to the highest standard. Addison Tyres is a family business which is celebrating over 50 years in the tyre industry.

Manufacturers

They are proud of their team of highly trained staff who make it their aim to offer trade and retail customers the highest standard of service.

Competitive Jason Addison, Director, commented: "We can offer trade customers supply only tyres and we welcome the general public all at competitive prices on all top brands and budget tyres as we deal with all the leading manufacturers through our Point S network with over 3,000 depots worldwide.

"We offer a range of specialist services including Hunter 4 Wheel Alignment, Locking Nut Removal, Wheel Refurbishment, TPMS and Motorcycle tyres with IMI Certified Ride-in-Ride-out fitting.

"The company boasts its unique selling point is the high quality workmanship offered by their highly trained staff and they are confident their investment in the latest technology will set them apart from their competitors."

Trained professionals can repair buckled alloys at Addison Tyres

For more information call 0121 557 4019 or visit the website www.addisontyrecentre.co.uk

Volunteer Centre Sandwell

Sandwell Volunteer Awards 2018

1978 - 2018 Celebrating 40 years of Volunteering in Sandwell

The Sandwell Volunteer Bi-annual Awards on Saturday 2nd June aim to promote the positive contributions of individuals and groups and celebrate their achievements.

Contact us on 0121 544 8326 or visit our website www.volunteercentresandwell.org.uk

Nominate somebody for an award

Environmental Volunteer
Long Service Volunteer
Community Organisation
Volunteer Co-ordinator
Corporate Volunteer
Health & Social Care Volunteer
Trustee
Young Volunteer

All those nominated for an award will receive a certificate regardless of whether they are shortlisted for an award

Our mission is to inspire more people in Sandwell to Volunteer, so they can enhance their lives, the lives of others and build resilient communities.

Contact us now to become a Volunteer

For further information contact
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Dignitaries attend for the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the opening of Choice Cars new office

The Call Centre is open 24/7. We are committed to the highest possible Standards at Choice Cars UK Ltd

Choice Cars has one of the largest fleets in Sandwell

Helping customers to make the right Choice of transport

A familiar sight on the streets of the Black Country

Choice Cars specialise in airport transfers

1-16 seaters are available for all occasions

Commercial feature

Our mission at Choice Cars is to be the most customer centric company, dedicated to setting the standards for all your travel requirements.

About us

Choice Cars have been operating for over 50 years serving the local area, providing a high standard of service to all of our customers and clients. We operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to make sure that we never let our clientele down ensuring we give you the best service possible. We are always able to meet your travel needs whatever they may be and always at a competitive price.

The company's success so far lies not only in its commitment to technology but also in the company's respect for the driver and client.

Private Hire Fleet

With one of the largest fleets in Sandwell, Choice Cars is a familiar sight, stretching its reach all over the Black Country. We pride ourselves for our outstanding customer service, with our average pick-up time of five minutes within the local area.

All our drivers are CRB checked and NVQ trained in compliance with Sandwell Licensing Office. We also have our own pre-set standards that each individual driver has to comply with in order to work for the company.

Pristine

Within our fleet we have MPVs, hatchbacks, saloons, estates and wheelchair access vehicles that can satisfy the travel requirements for any type of journey you may need. Every vehicle in the fleet is checked daily alongside random spot checks to ensure they are kept in pristine condition not only for the benefit of the company appearance but to ensure that the client's journey is in complete comfort, safety and style.

Travel office

The travel office is a unique team of individuals who have been highly trained to help with all your travel needs. This specialist team is available 24/7 to provide advice and help where needed and work with you to make your journey an easy efficient experience.

Sponsoring Wednesbury's community youth football team The Silverdale Warriors

Technology

Our success so far has been made up of short client waiting times, reliable and professional service. We pride ourselves on offering an average waiting time of just five minutes within the local area and offering a ring back service to let the passenger know when their vehicle has arrived. Technology is at the heart of everything we do, allowing us to manage the whole process from the time you make the call right the way through to drop off.

Each vehicle is fitted with a sophisticated computerised PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) that allows us to track all our vehicles; it is constantly allowing us to calculate the most efficient routes to pick up each client and drop them off in the most cost effective way possible.

Services we provide

· Local & National Service – We always go the extra mile to ensure you travel in luxury and comfort. With our professional and efficient service it's the reason why we are one of the biggest companies in Sandwell.

Always meet your travel needs and at a competitive price

· Airport Transfers – We provide a reliable airport service for individual and corporate clients 24 hours a day. We are Sandwell's biggest airport transfers company.

We can also include a 'meet and greet' service, where we will monitor your flight number with the British Airways Authority website and upon arrival we will meet you at the terminal with a welcome board with your name on it. We will then safely get you to your destination.

· Contracts and Corporate Accounts – Not only do we provide a professional, reliable and competitive service, it's free to set up an account with us and you will receive 24/7 support included. We can arrange invoices to be settled weekly, fortnightly or monthly depending upon your preference. We also have executive vehicles available for business events, office journeys and airport transfers. We already have a vast number of accounts set which include hospitals, nursing homes, schools, hotels, leisure centres, retail and recruitment companies.

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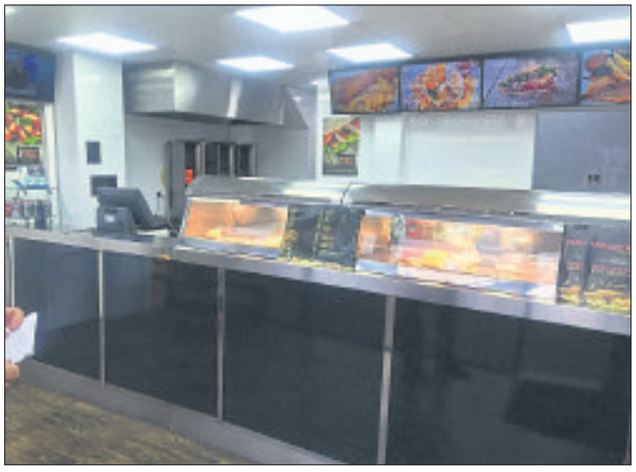


The modern interior of the fish and chip shop where there is plenty of choice available

The traditional fish and chips which are always a favourite

A poster to show the award winning kebabs on offer

Fresh, affordable food for all tastes with traditional values

Since having been taken over four months ago and given a new lease of life, Stanley Road Fish and Chip Shop in Oldbury is being hailed as possible the best chip shop in The West Midlands by the people who know it.

The new owners have brought attention to detail and listened to the customers' needs plus installed traditional family values along with traditional fish and chips.

Their cod is fresh from the North Sea and brought straight to you.

So it's no wonder why people are coming from afar to try their food, not only can you get good old-fashioned fish and chips for only £2.50, a cone of chips for only 50 pence (not frozen chips either) or a kids meal with a toy for £1.50 – you will wonder how they make any profit!

All the produce is fresh, the fish is cooked while you wait, with a wide range of choice to choose from, the place (no not the fish) is spotless and is cleaned many times throughout the day.

Pleasing

Any customer is able to see through to the kitchen and refrigeration area from the counter and get an idea for themselves of how spotless the shop is, and it is very pleasing on the eye for the customer to know that they are in very good hands.

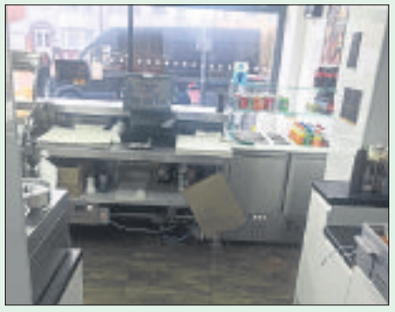
It is also reassuring to know that the family who run Stanley Road chip shop are in it for the long haul, so it is easy to see why the shop is rapidly getting rave after rave reviews.

There are also plans in the future to expand but that is a year or so down the line, so why not treat yourself to the traditional Great

British fish and chips and pop along to The Stanley Road chip shop , go on, give your taste buds a deserved treat – one you won't forget.

Only the freshest ingredients are used

A selection of the best pies are available



A view showing the cleanliness of the kitchen

The smart frontage of the Stanley Road Fish and Chip Shop, going from strength to strength after opening four months ago

> "Yummy food. It is run by a fantastic couple who are friendly"

Meanwhile, here are a few reviews about how good they are:

- **Yummy fish and chips**
- *Fantastic take away chip shop. Lovely chips and fish that are not too greasy.*
- **Yummy food. It is run by a fantastic couple who are friendly.**
- *Definitely recommend the take away shop. Excellent fish and chips, haddock particularly recommended*
- **I think we all at times find that our favourite shops and places of business tend to go off and don't consistently supply us with their usual best product. That's what has happened in our case, we have regular places that we visit for our fish and chips, and yes in the past they have been very good, but recently we noticed that we were either being given smaller portions for our money or they were not up to the usual standard, stale etc. it was for this reason we started to look round for alternatives. We happened to be driving along Stanley Road towards the Hagley Road and noticed that the Chinese takeaway had closed down; on closer inspection I saw this bright, clean new fish and chip shop had replaced it, on the off chance I decided to try it and was amazed at the quality and the size of the portions. After several visits I found the staff to be lovely people so friendly, I feel that when someone makes the effort to provide a good service they should be recognised for it. I would advise everyone to give this place a try, it so clean and friendly and excellent value for money. Thank you for excellent value for money.**

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Any Burger & Chips & Can of Pop
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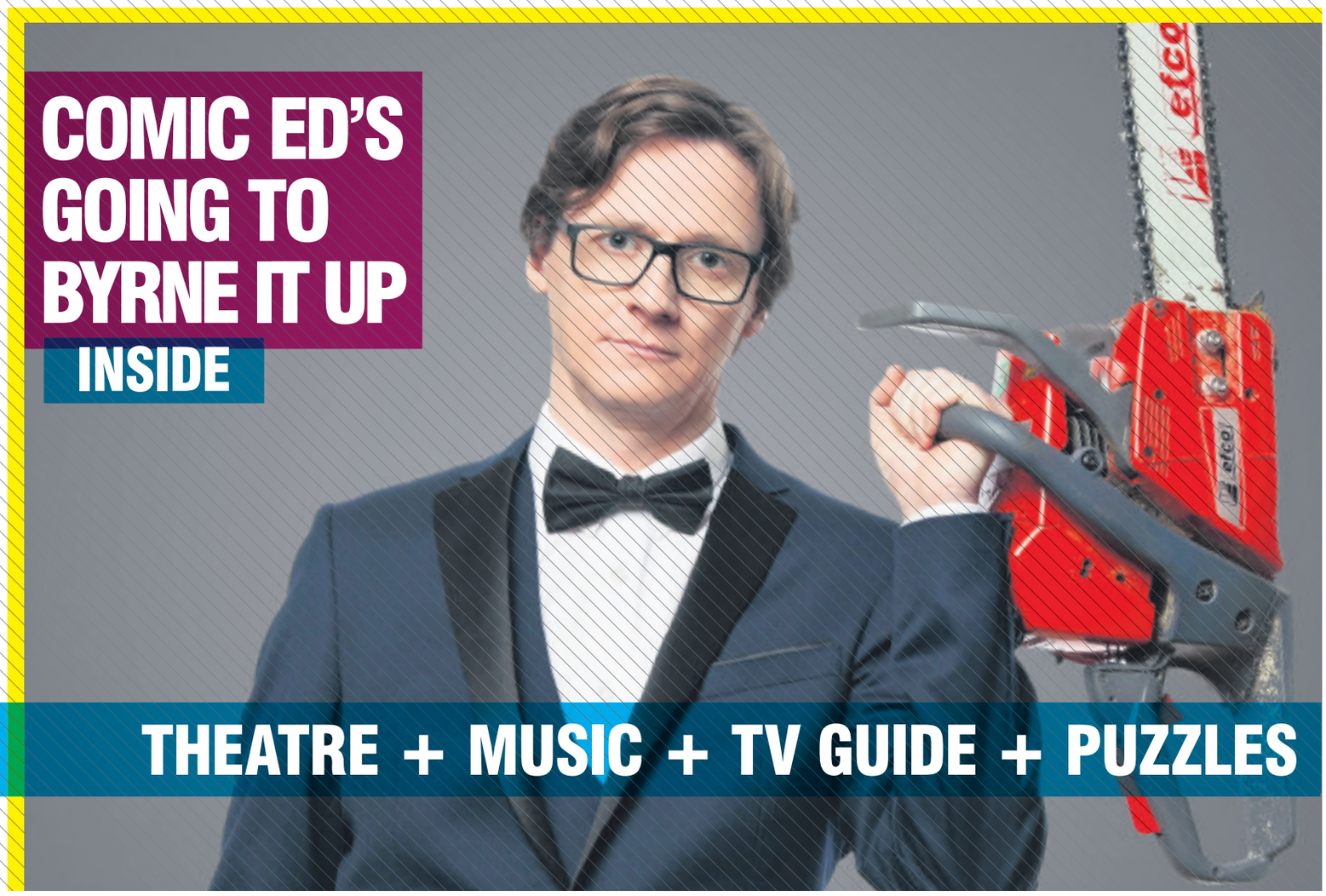

COMIC ED'S GOING TO BYRNE IT UP

INSIDE

THEATRE + MUSIC + TV GUIDE + PUZZLES

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

TRADITIONAL PUB GRUB 7 DAYS A WEEK!

If you fancy traditional pub grub then look no further than the Harriers Pub located in Powis Avenue, Tipton, DY4 0NF. Where there kitchen is open 7 days a week.

The Harriers also cater for families where there is also a children's menu on offer.

Serving all your pub classics as well as the in demand Sunday Carvery where you can find a selection of meats, as well has a nice variety of vegetables.

The Harriers Pub also comes alive at night over the weekend has they offer a weekly entertainment program on a Friday and Saturday night which you will find regular DJ's and live entertainment.

Coming very soon, customers will be able to enjoy a breakfast and lunch club, which will be every Friday and Saturday. Please visit our facebook page for more information.

If it's a game of bingo you're looking for, then look no further, every Monday night from 7pm - 9pm. If you can't make that then no need to worry, we also have a Wednesday afternoon session from 12pm - 2pm. So eyes down look in!

Customers old and new will also find regular drinks promotions on offer which are not to be missed!!

The Harriers also offer a FREE function room which is ideal for all occasions including Weddings, Christenings, and all birthday celebrations.

There is also a child's outside play area which will keep all children entertained as well as an outside seating area.

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Time to get ready for Byrne's night

Stand-up star Ed Byrne is returning to the West Midlands with his new show, Spoiler Alert. He will headline Stafford Gatehouse tomorrow and Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday.

Ed is on the road after a total sell-out Edinburgh Fringe run with his biggest ever tour to date. He says: "I originally intended to call the show 'I'll Millennial You in a Minute', but my promoter considered the title 'off-puttingly baffling'."

In the show, Ed explores the thin line between righteous complaining and brat-like whining and asks, 'are we right to be fed up, or are we spoiled?'

Ed is recognised as one of the finest observational comics in the industry. His TV credits include Mock The Week, Have I Got News For You, The Graham Norton Show, Live At The Apollo, The One Show, Comic Relief Bake Off 2015, The World's Most Dangerous Roads and, most recently, he and Dara O Briain filmed the follow up to their Big Adventure show for BBC Two entitled Dara and Ed's Road to Mandalay.

He will return to the region to headline Lichfield's Garrick on April 24.

Ed has been an acclaimed stand-up (with audiences and critics alike) for 20 years. His success with shows such as the Roaring Forties, Different Class and the 1998 Perrier-nominated A Night At The Opera led to him appearing on the box in the diverse likes of Mock The Week, Father Ted, The One Show and All Star Mr & Mrs, while his love of hillwalking resulted in him writing a regular column for The Great Outdoors magazine.

NATURAL

In fact, his love of natural history has crossed into television with appearances on The One Show (abseiling in Snowdonia), Countryfile (climbing Sgùrr Dearg, the 'inaccessible pinnacle' on Skye) and presenting items on Volcano Live (BBC).

The Irish comic is firmly of a belief that the current breed of parents spoil their kids rotten whether it's to do with the ever-increasing size of garden trampolines, or his own kids' demand for elderflower cordial.

"My dad wasn't a bad dad, he was just a 1970s dad. If I could never see my children ever again from this moment on, I've already done more parenting then he did in my entire life. But, of course, I made a conscious decision that I was going to be an awesome dad. My wife will come back with tales from her friends of how awful their husbands are and she'll see me smiling and say 'alright, stop congratulating yourself just because such and such can't be left alone with their children for two minutes'."

In his new touring show, the perfectly-titled Spoiler Alert, Ed compares and contrasts the old-school child-rearing days with 21st century methods and suggests that there are different ways to learn how to be a mum or dad.

"I grew up in what I would call an aspirational household in that my parents bettered themselves over the course of my childhood. My mother was a radiographer and ended up a lecturer in radiography, while my dad was a sheet metal worker and went up to a supervisory role. I'd still say that you are expected to do a lot more parenting than our parents did and that's a weird thing because you tend to think that your parents are who you learnt parenting from. But you don't, really, it's more that you look around to see what's going on with other parents."

For the show, Ed extends his analysis on the culture of entitlement to look at areas where we could perhaps do with being spoiled a little bit more. "Where I think we're not acting spoiled enough is in the political arena. We have a tendency to accept what's happening and that's where we should be acting more entitled: we are literally entitled to the government we want. We're spoiled in all these little ways, but not spoiled enough."

As well as stories about his two young sons, Ed weaves in routines about running out of petrol in the most awkward place imaginable, helping rescue an injured man in the Cairngorms, and the nation-dividing campaign and result of the EU referendum. His way of tackling Brexit is to draw an analogy with the time his son was determined to touch an electric fence with his dad trying to warn him of the dangers.

Byrne out – Ed brings his latest tour to Stafford and Birmingham

"I was telling the story of the electric fence for a while, and then suddenly it struck me that it was Brexit in microcosm. I don't want to alienate half of the population or maybe a third of my audience, but it works as an analogy whichever side you're on. The government told you not to do this and that it would be a terrible idea, but you said 'no, we want to do it anyway'. So now we're doing it and it's proving a terrible idea. I do think it's a fair analogy, but no doubt for some it will come across as me being a typical liberal elite Remoaner."

Spoiler Alert also continues a theme that he's tackled in previous shows, that of his gradual shift from being a working-class Dubliner to a fully paid-up rural-residing member of the middle classes. Where once he would do routines slating 4x4 owners, he is now the proud(ish) owner of such a vehicle. And in the poster for his tour, he brandishes other signifiers of social mobility: a bowtie and chainsaw. "It's one of two I own: that one is the smaller of the two," Ed remarks of his chainsaw rather than his neckwear. "I use it for firewood, both for my wood burning stove and also for the barbecue. The first time I used one I was fine, though I think it worried my parents that I had bought a chainsaw." Having premiered Spoiler Alert at the Fringe and used the month of August to hone the show, Ed is happy. "Being on stage is enjoyable and this part of the writing process is enjoyable. The empty page though is a scary thing. On the first leg of the tour I'll do about an hour and 15 minutes, plus I'll have a support act. I keep a tour diary now of places where the curries are disappointing and where they are good and where audiences have been good before."

> *I keep a tour diary now of places where the curries are disappointing*

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Tips for the top The Amazons

We're delighted to now be headline act in Brum

THEY'RE starting their headline tour at Birmingham's Institute next Thursday, February 1.

And The Amazons couldn't be happier about that. Because in a former life and in a former band, they once played there as a blink-and-you'll-miss-them support act.

Frontman Matt Thomson and bandmates Elliot Briggs and Chris Alderton opened for The Mystery Jets back in 2012.

"That feels like a long time ago," says Matt, whose band enjoyed a top ten hit with their self-titled debut album in May.

"We landed a support slot with The Mystery Jets. It was us and Swim Deep on the bill. I only just caught up with the Mystery Jets at a Christmas party at the end of last year. I told them they were great to us when we were supporting them. We had a really good time. So to go back to that same venue, but as the headline act, is really important to us. It's going to be great."

The Amazons formed in 2014 in Reading and were snapped up by Fiction Records in 2015. They recorded their debut album in 2016 and released it in May. It went straight in at number eight, cementing their status as one of Britain's most exciting new bands.

By then they had been included in the BBC's Sound of 2017 and MTV's Brand New 2017 lists. They were also named a band to listen to in 2017 by NME, The Independent and BBC Radio 1. This is the year when they must deliver on that promise.

Jonn hopes his talk will be Atomic

Ned's Atomic Dustbin frontman Jonn Penney has been thinking about writing his autobiography.

He's 50, he's got a couple of kids – and he wants to write down his stories before he forgets them.

The only trouble is he doesn't know where to start. So he's planning a special appearance at Wolverhampton Literature Festival tomorrow (Saturday) at the city's Slade Rooms from 8.45pm. He'll be with Neds' guitarist Ratt – playing songs, telling stories and answering questions.

Jonn explains: "The thing is, I'm too damn lazy to do it myself. I'm also frightened at the prospect of writing enough words to make a book. And also, as has been said, I'm very much a reactionary person and I need a nudge. I sat down and started writing this book and I couldn't remember. So we thought we'd do something where people can prompt me – where the fans can ask questions and jog my memory – then I'll be able to do it.

"Once the fans get me started, they transport me back to my flat in Lye where I'm hungover and it's early in the morning and I've just written a few lyrics. I'm a waffler, so I just need encouragement to get me going.I'm not stupid enough to think there's a massive market out there for the memoirs of a singer from a lesser known indie band from England. But it's worth having it down somewhere."

Jonn has played a huge number of gigs during his career, headlining festival stages, playing sell out gigs at Wolves Civic Hall and featuring on Top of the Pops. He will be fronting the Neds again at a sold out 02 Academy in Birmingham at the Love From Stourbridge gig with The Wonder Stuff on April 14, the first of two consecutive nights at the venue.

Gaga is Joanne for Arena dates

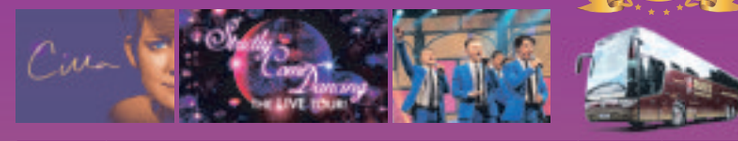
Lady Gaga brings her Joanne world tour to Birmingham with gigs at the city centre Arena on Wednesday and at the Genting Arena the following night. Other key gigs include psychedelic rock at the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath with Americans Wand on Monday and Moon Duo on Tuesday. Will Varley previews his Spirit of Minnie album at the 02 Institute on Tuesday, the same night Terry Bickers (House of Love/Levitation) teams up with Pete Fij at Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton.

Dance, romance and murder on stage

Dance dominates over the next few days with Strictly's Anton de Beke and Erin Boag in action at the Symphony Hall on Saturday with dancers, singer Lance Ellington and the London Concert Orchestra. Then the Russian State Ballet of Siberia make their annual visit to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre to present The Nutcracker (Sunday, matinee), Romeo and Juliet (Monday) and Swan Lake (Tuesday). Meanwhile, murder swap thriller Strangers on a Train is at the New Alexandra Theatre (Monday-Saturday) with John Middleton (Emmerdale), Christopher Harper (Coronation Street) and Hannah Tointon (Mr Selfridge). Carole King musical Beautiful returns to Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday and the romantic Brief Encounter opens at Birmingham Rep on Friday, February 2.

Its' Showtime...

45 ANNIVERSARY



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02	The Band – Music of Take That	Queens	2	225.00
04	Thriller	Hilton	1	135.00
10	Phantom of the Opera	Hilton	1	145.00
10	Strictly Come Dancing	Doubletree	1	175.00
10	Mamma Mia	Hilton	1	169.50
10	Wicked	Day Excursion	-	75.00
11	Strictly Come Dancing	Hilton Waldorf	1	195.00
14	Cilla The Musical – Oxford	Day Excursion	-	69.50
15	Annie	Day Excursion	-	75.00
18	Sunday Lunch Thames Cruise	Hilton Waldorf	1	159.50
24	Wicked or Phantom	Hilton	1	From 135.00
MARCH	**SHOW / EXCURSION**	**HOTEL**	**NIGHTS**	**PRICE £**
01	Warner Studios – Harry Potter	Day Excursion	-	69.50
02	Woman in Black and Afternoon Tea Cruise	Marriott	2	199.50
02	Mamma Mia or Kinky Boots and Afternoon Tea Cruise	Marriott	2	From 225.00
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03/10/17/24	Harry Potter plus Film Locations	Hilton	1	149.50
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16	42nd Street	Marriott	2	235.00
16	Les Miserables	Marriott	2	239.50
17	Cilla The Musical	Doubletree	1	159.50
18	Ideal Home Show Exhibition	Day Excursion	-	39.50
23	Wicked or Phantom	Marriott	2	199.50
30	John Bishop in Liverpool	Mercure	2	199.50
30	School of Rock	Marriott	2	235.00
30	Motown	Marriott	2	239.50

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Wicked

Based on Gregory Maguire's acclaimed 1995 novel, Wicked re-imagines the land of Oz first created by L. Frank Baum in 1900. This multi award-winning stage musical is directed by Joe Mantello with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and a book by Winnie Holzman.

In this fantastic production, blond and popular Glinda forms an unlikely friendship with strange and misunderstood green girl Elphaba when they meet as sorcery students at Shiz University. After meeting the Wonderful Wizard of Oz their lives take different paths. Their adventures have extraordinary and unforeseen consequences which culminate in very different destinies.

London Theatre Break

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Omega Holidays cannot be held responsible for the non-appearance of a particular actor/actress; no refunds will be given in this event. Whilst we always try to ensure that parties are seated together, very occasionally, it may be necessary for parties to be split. Couples are always seated together. Tours offered subject to availability. Errors and omissions excepted. Prices shown are per person, based on two people sharing a dbl/twin room. Single supplements apply.

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, January 25, 2018

SATURDAY'S TV JANUARY 27

CHOICE

Rob Beckett

All Together Now (BBC1, 7.15pm)

New series. Rob Beckett hosts the musical talent show with a twist, as a range of singers step on-stage for a chance to win a £50,000 cash prize. The judging panel takes the form of 'The 100', a large collective of music experts and performers from all over the UK led by Geri Horner. However, in this talent show, the key to success is encouraging the judges to sing along too, and the more panellists each singer manages to win over, the better their chances of proceeding to the grand final.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Everyday. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Tennis: Australian Open 2018. **2.30** Live Bowls: World Indoor Championships. Coverage of the open singles semi-finals. **4.30** Final Score. **5.25** BBC News. **5.35** Regional Programme. **5.40** And They're Off for Sport Relief.

6.25 Pointless Celebrities. Mark Steel, Marcus Brigstocke, Nicky Campbell, Rachel Burden, Liz Kershaw, DJ Nihal, Shaun Keaveny and Nemone take part in a radio-themed edition of the quiz.

7.15 All Together Now. New series. Rob Beckett hosts the musical talent show in which contestants must successfully encourage members of a 100-strong judging panel to sing along with them to win.

8.20 Casualty. Dylan struggles to keep his alcoholism under control, as staff on the ED deal with what is suspected to be a case of domestic abuse. Meanwhile, Ethan's first day as Clinical Lead fails to go according to plan, as he finds himself veering wildly from one disaster to another, and he starts to understand the real pressure of leading a team.

9.10 BBC News; Weather.

9.30 Hard Sun. Hicks uncovers the extent of Renko's investigation into the Alex Butler murder, and journalist Will Benedetti's connection to Hard Sun makes him the spree killer's next target. When Blackwood publicly announces that only Fr Dennis can stop him killing again, the priest is immediately cast as a figure of public hate, and London becomes a city under siege. With chaos unfolding all around, Grace gives Daniel some shocking information about his father. Pre-apocalyptic thriller, starring Agyness Deyn.

10.30 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Gary Lineker presents action from the fourth-round ties, including Newport County v Tottenham Hotspur at Rodney Parade and Liverpool v West Bromwich Albion at Anfield; National Lottery Update.

12.00 The NFL Show. **12.30 Film:** What Doesn't Kill You. (2008) **2.05** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 The Wonder of Animals. (R) **6.35** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **7.05** The Pets Factor. **7.30** Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch. **7.45** Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch. **8.00** The Dengineers. **8.30** Deadly Top 10. (R) **9.00** Robot Wars. (R) **10.00** Robot Wars. (R) **11.00** The Snow Wolf Family and Me. (R) **12.00** The Hairy Bikers' Mediterranean Adventure. (R) **1.00** A Vicar's Life. (R) **1.30 Film:** The Diary of Anne Frank. (1959) **4.15** Italy's Invisible Cities. (R) **5.15** Trust Me, I'm a Doctor. (R) **5.45** Tom Kerridge: Lose Weight for Good. (R)

6.15 Hugh's Wild West. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall investigates efforts to bring beavers back to the Dorset-Devon border, and a swan herd at Abbotsbury Swannery rounds up his charges for a health check.

7.15 A House Through Time. David Olusoga follows the story of the Liverpool house residents from 1891 to 1945, including a family of saddlers who lived there for four decades and a docker with a secret. (R)

8.15 Dad's Army. Mainwaring and the platoon dress as firemen to take part in an initiative exercise, but soon find themselves tackling a real fire. Comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and Clive Dunn. (R)

8.45 Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs. Paul Murton travels into the secret heart of the Rough Bounds of Knoydart, by way of Loch nan Umbh, Loch Morar, Loch Nevis and Loch Arkaig.

9.15 QI XL. Josh Widdicombe, Stephen K Amos and Cally Beaton join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig in an extended edition of the unconventional quiz.

10.00 Darcey Bussell: Dance Beyond Boundaries. The former ballerina reveals how street dance group Boy Blue Entertainment and Canadian-based ice dancing collective Le Patin Libre are helping to revolutionise modern dance.

10.30 Film: Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance). (2014) Premiere. A faded movie star wrestles with a personal crisis as he tries to put on a disaster-afflicted Broadway play. Oscar-winning drama, with Michael Keaton and Edward Norton.

12.20 Bowls: World Indoor Championships Highlights. **1.20 Film:** Girl with a Pearl Earring. (2003) **2.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister Six. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.55** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.25** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **12.25** Countrywise. (R) **12.55** ITV News; Weather. **1.00** Dancing on Ice. (R) **3.15** Catchphrase. (R) **4.00** Tipping Point. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.05 ITV News; Weather.

6.20 New You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates another round of viewer-submitted comedy clips, including a hoverboard destroying an office, and a man falling through a casino ceiling.

6.45 Take Me Out. A warehouse worker from Wolverhampton and a musician from Leicester are among the men seeking the approval of Paddy McGuinness's panel of 30 single ladies.

8.00 The Voice UK. The fourth round of Blind Auditions arrives, as Emma Willis ushers another selection of would-be stars onto the stage to have their skills appraised. As ever, coaches Jennifer Hudson, Tom Jones, Will.i.am and Olly Murs are all seated with their backs to the contestants, meaning they must judge each performer's skill based solely on the power of their voice. Any of the would-be stars who are welcomed to join a coach's team will be in with a chance of ultimately claiming a record deal with Polydor.

9.30 Through the Keyhole. Stephen Mulhern, Louis Walsh and Rochelle Humes form the panel as Keith Lemon challenges them to guess the mystery owners of three more celebrity homes.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Film: Jaws: The Revenge. (1987) The remaining members of the Brody family are terrorised by a bloodthirsty great white shark in the Bahamas. Thriller sequel, starring Michael Caine, Lorraine Gary and Lance Guest.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **6.40** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** Coast vs Country. (R) **3.25** A Place in the Sun. (R) **4.30** A Place in the Sun. (R) **5.30** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore the Marne-Rhine Canal. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 Village of the Year. Archaeologist Alex Langlands, garden designer Juliet Sargeant and craft expert Patrick Grant are called on to decide which five villages from this week's heats should claim a place in the grand final. Plus, Penelope Keith hears more from the five contenders in the South East Zone.

9.00 Holocaust: The Revenge Plot. Documentary, making use of previously undisclosed recordings and candid interviews to tell the story of the Avengers, a secret organisation of Holocaust survivors who came up with a brutal plot in 1946 to seek vengeance on behalf of the six million Jews killed by Hitler and the Nazis. In the dying days of the Second World War, "warrior-poet" Abba Kovner came to the conclusion that the prosecution of a handful of Nazis would not amount to justice, and instead claimed only "an eye for an eye" could possibly redress the balance. With the help of a band of like-minded individuals, Kovner planned to murder six million Germans by infiltrating cities and poisoning water supplies. This film also showcases a clandestine recording, made in 1985 at the dying Kovner's request, that identifies all the leading conspirators and how they carried out their operations.

10.00 Film: The Monuments Men. (2014) Fact-based drama, directed by and starring George Clooney.

12.20 Film: Snake Eyes. (1998) **2.00** The Last Leg. (R) **2.55** Hollyoaks. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.45** Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. (R) **11.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.05** The A-Team. (R) **2.05** The A-Team. (R) **3.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **5.00** Rich House, Poor House. (R)

6.00 The Wonderful World of Puppies. The development of puppies' senses. The dalmatian litter has reached six weeks old. As a breed they are susceptible to deafness, so they are taken for to the vet for a crucial hearing test. A new litter of golden doodles reveal how puppy eyesight develops week by week, cameras track the progress of a springer spaniel as he begins training to become a mountain search-and-rescue dog, and the labrador puppies reach six weeks old – time to find out if they have the senses and skills to pass their guide dog test.

7.00 Greatest Ever Celebrity Wind Ups. Joe Pasquale revisits more celebrity pranks, including the time Justin Bieber's elaborate trick for Taylor Swift, and incognito meet-and-greets with Michael Buble and Mark Hamill.

8.00 Blind Date. Paul O'Grady plays matchmaker for a reformed "bad-boy" and a nightclub hostess, and past couples Jonathan and Kelly, and Joanna and David return to dish the dirt on their dates.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.05 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Bristol City v Queens Park Rangers, and Ipswich Town v Wolverhampton Wanderers.

10.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Catching up with the celebrities as they react to Friday night's double eviction, revealing how the departure of two housemates has affected the remaining contestants.

11.05 The X-Files. Mulder and Scully uncover a medical laboratory where extreme genetic experimentation has been going on for decades, breeding subjects who possess unexpected and dangerous powers. (R)

12.00 Britain's Greatest Bridges. **12.10** SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Enemies Closer. (2013) **4.30** Access. **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.35** House Busters. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Children of the Holocaust **8.00** Surviving the Holocaust – Freddie Knoller's War **9.00** Spiral **10.55** Top of the Pops: 1985 **12.05** The Easybeats to AC/DC: The Story of Aussie Rock **1.05** New York Rock at the BBC **2.05** Joy of the Guitar Riff **3.05** Close

ITV2

11.30 Take Me Out **12.45** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.10 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **3.25 Film:** The Flintstones (1994) **4.25** FYI Daily **4.30 Film:** The Flintstones (1994) **5.10 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) **6.15** FYI Daily **6.20 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) **9.00 Film:** Fast & Furious 5 (2011) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** Fast & Furious 5 (2011) **11.35** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.35** Ibiza Weekender **2.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

1.50 Rosemary & Thyme **2.55 Film:** Columbo: Sex and the Married Detective (1989) **4.55** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Foyle's War **1.00** On the Buses **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

1.30 ITV Racing: Live from Cheltenham. Coverage of Festival Trials Day. **4.00 Film:** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) **6.05** Storage Wars **7.00** Darts: The Masters Live. Coverage of day two from Milton Keynes. **11.00 Film:** Assault on Precinct 13 (2005) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** Assault on Precinct 13 (2005) **1.10** Car Crash Global: Caught on Camera **2.10** The Protectors **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.40 Film: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **1.30 Film:** Toy Story That Time Forgot (2014) **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) **11.00** Gogglebox **12.00** Naked Attraction **1.10** Rude Tube **2.15** Gogglebox **3.10** Naked Attraction **4.05** The Goldbergs **4.30** How I Met Your Mother **5.15** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4

11.00 Courage Mountain (1990) **1.00** Stuart Little 2 (2002) **2.35** Patton (1970) **5.50** Avatar (2009) **9.00** Exodus: Gods and Kings (2014) **11.55** The Midnight Meat Train (2008) **2.00** Series 7: The Contenders (2001) **3.55** Close

ADVERTISEMENT

Sandwell age UK

Lunch Club and Day Care Centre

An opportunity to meet up have a two course lunch, socialise and have some laughs. We meet every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at Age UK Sandwell Day Centre, 1a Beeches Road, West Bromwich B70 6QE. 0121 525 2499. Day trips, bingo, quizzes and chair based exercise. Transport provided if you live in Sandwell and FREE taster sessions available.

To secure a place, please call us on **0121 525 2499** or email **daycare@ageuksandwell.org.uk**

Registered charity number 1080517

Sandwell age UK

Age UK Sandwell offers all sorts of care and support services to help older people live their later life in comfort.

Older people can access day care and a drop in lunch club at our day centre in Beeches Road, West Bromwich, offering exercise sessions, quizzes, group games and day trips. We offer support with mobility problems and personal care from NVQ qualified, trained and experienced care workers.

Full day care sessions are provided for older people with dependent or personal care needs; those with very poor mobility, who have been assessed by social services and offered a care package or who want to pay privately. This service costs £26.49 per day with a subscription charge of £8.50 per day for activities, transport and meals.

"I like that everybody is like an extended family and I like the staff and volunteers as they do so much for me and are cheerful about it - 5 stars to everybody"

Lunch club drop in sessions are also available at £15 per day for activities and meals. We can also offer transport to and from the day centre for the lunch club (if you live in Sandwell) at a daily charge of £2.50. If you live outside of Sandwell you will need to make your own way to us but can still attend. Free taster sessions are available - call us to arrange a place.

"Dad lives for day club, he has short term memory loss but he remembers his visits to day club".

We offer an information and advice (including Benefits Advice); at various locations across the borough to assess if older people (particularly those aged 65+) are entitled to any additional benefits. Older people can also call us on 0121 314 4526 to access support via telephone.

Our Community Support services offer access to activities at locations across the borough including IT and digital inclusion classes (e.g. using a pc, laptop tablet, digital camera or mobile phone), Physical activity such as bowling group or exercise classes and friendship groups.

Our Creative Hub at The Wesley Community Centre in West Bromwich offers Men's Club (Mondays 10.30am -12.30pm), Exercise class (Tuesdays 12-1pm) , Tea dances (once per month), Cinema Club (once per month) Craft sessions(Wednesdays 10.30am - 12.30pm), Art club, Advice surgery drop in and Digital drop in (Thursday 1-3pm).

For information on any of these please call 0121 314 4526 or email us on info@ageuksandwell.org.uk

"After my husband passed away I felt lonely we did everything together and I really missed him. Coming to the day centre made me feel part of things again".

SUNDAY'S TV JANUARY 28

CHOICE

Brenda Blethyn

Vera
(ITV, 8pm)
The dead body of a teenage boy is found in a reservoir near a remote rural timber community. Vera and her team investigate, and discover that the boy had already been missing for three days prior to his death. However, the case is complicated by an apparent conspiracy of silence, as many of the townsfolk refuse to cooperate with the police investigation. A complex web of relationships between the victim's friends and family slowly emerges, with many dark secrets that could have driven someone to kill. Brenda Blethyn, Kenny Doughty, Jon Morrison and Kingsley Ben-Adir star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.00** Songs of Praise. **2.35** Big Cats. (R) **3.35** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. Cardiff City v Manchester City (Kick-off 4.00pm).
6.05 BBC News.
6.20 Regional Programme.
6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker visits a sheep farm in Crieff run by two brothers who are preparing to follow in the footsteps of their father and sister by joining the British Olympic curling team. Charlotte Smith goes in search of the perfect trees to make cakers for the Highland Games, Adam Henson discovers how the local climate gives Cornish sheep farmers an advantage, and Tom Heap reports on the culling of mountain hares in the Scottish Highlands.
7.30 Still Open All Hours. Granville tries to stop Madge from moving away and taking Mavis with her – but there is only one person who can change their minds, and he has been dead for years.
8.00 Call the Midwife. Lucille is on duty when a friend of Valerie's goes into labour – but when the patient's health deteriorates, the new recruit is accused of incompetence by her racist mother.
9.00 McMafia. Alex fears his family are under threat when Vadim learns the truth about him – but his paranoia about a surveillance operation drives a wedge between him and Rebecca.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Action from the latest fourth-round ties – Norwich City or Chelsea v Newcastle United and Cardiff City v Manchester City.
11.05 The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.
11.40 Teenage Knife Wars. Jermaine Jenas investigates the spike in knife crime that is devastating young lives. (R)
12.10 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.15 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.20** The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **7.35** Monty Don's Paradise Gardens. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Food & Drink. (R) **11.30** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Nature's Perfect Partners: Natural World. (R) **1.00** Tennis: Australian Open 2018. **2.30** Live Bowls: World Indoor Championships. **5.15** Ski Sunday.
6.00 Britain's Cycling Superheroes: The Price of Success. The controversy surrounding Britain's international cyclists. (R)
7.00 Yellowstone: The Toughest Spring. Cameras follow as winter turns to spring in Yellowstone during 2016, capturing the re-emergence of a range of animals, who leave their winter dens to explore the new, green world. (R)
8.00 Dragons' Den. More entrepreneurs present their money-making ideas to the panellists, including pitches for natural raw dog food, a date-based smoothie and a free-running exercise regime.
9.00 Chris Packham: In Search of the Lost Girl. The naturalist goes in search of a member of a nomadic tribe in Sumatra whom he photographed 20 years previously, and discovers the impact of deforestation on the country.
10.00 The Mash Report. Nish Kumar and a cast of comedy correspondents present the satirical and surreal take on the week's news. (R)
10.30 Insert Name Here. Tom Davis, Kate Williams, Robert Peston and Aisling Bea join captains Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe to answer Sue Perkins' questions about famous namesakes. (R)
11.00 Cleverman. New series. Koen comes back to life stronger than ever, a mysterious stranger comes to the aid of his surviving followers and Slade begins carrying out experiments on the Hairies.
11.55 Film: Norfolk. (2015) Premiere. A mercenary leads an idyllic life with his son, until the day when a mysterious stranger pushes him into one last mission. Drama, with Denis Menochet.
1.15 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.15** Holby City. (R) **3.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister Six. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.55** Scrambled!: Ben 10. **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Spy School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** River Monsters. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **11.30** The Voice UK. (R) **12.55** ITV News; Weather. **1.10** Britain's Brightest Family. (R) **1.40** The Cruise: Return to the Mediterranean. (R) **2.10 Film:** You've Got Mail. (1998) Romantic comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. **4.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**4.40** ITV News; Weather. **5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)
6.00 Dancing on Ice. Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby present the skating challenge, with the 10 remaining contestants and their professional partners performing to impress the judges and avoid elimination.
8.00 Vera. A teenage boy is found dead in a reservoir near a remote rural town. Vera takes on the case, and uncovers a web of fractured relationships within the community. Last in the series.
10.00 ITV News; Weather.
10.15 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)
11.10 Next of Kin. Mona returns to the UK from Karachi and, despite her injuries, is determined to investigate her nephew Danny's suspected links to radical Islamic terrorists. But on the day of her brother Kareem's funeral, the GP's efforts to get Danny to safety have unexpectedly dire consequences for the family. Thriller about a doctor who is drawn into a tangle of betrayal, conspiracy and murder after her brother's kidnapping brings buried family secrets to light, starring Archie Panjabi, Jack Davenport, Claire Skinner and Viveik Kalra. (R)
12.05 Great Art. Tim Marlow explores the life and work of Rembrandt. (R) **1.00** Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. Guests air their differences. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **6.20** The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.55** The Simpsons. (R) **3.25 Film:** Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties. (2006) Family comedy, with the voice of Bill Murray. **4.55 Film:** How to Train Your Dragon. (2010) Animated fantasy, with the voice of Jay Baruchel.
6.40 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Posh Pawn. James test drives an Austin A35 van and meets 1980s pop star Leee John, who is hoping to sell a collection of jewellery he believes is worth £40,000. Claudia visits the Manchester store to appraise some designer bags.
8.00 The Biggest Little Railway in the World. The track approaches Inverness, but has to cross the 60-metre Aberchalder Viaduct first. Dick suggests switching the steam engine with an electric one, to the outrage of the purists on the team. An ingenious solution is developed to cross a flight of steps on the approach to the city. In the forests surrounding Loch Ness, the track laying team's spirits are flagging and Molly considers quitting the project.
9.00 SAS: Who Dares Wins. The remaining recruits are challenged to dive backwards and blindfolded into a reservoir from a gangplank 10 metres up, before moving on to the most psychologically demanding stage of training – resisting interrogation. A simulated capture puts the friendship between two of the group to the test, as they are pushed towards betraying one another.
10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comical words-and-numbers quiz, with Alan Carr and Josh Widdicombe taking on Joe Wilkinson and Sara Pascoe. Bill Bailey helps out in Dictionary Corner. (R)
11.00 Film: Side Effects. (2013) Thriller, starring Jude Law.
1.00 Holocaust: The Revenge Plot. (R) **1.55** The Supervet. (R) **2.50** Coast vs Country. (R) **3.45** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.10** Coast vs Country. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.40** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.10** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.25** Nella the Princess Knight. **8.40** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.20** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15 Film:** Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves. (1991) Action adventure, starring Kevin Costner. **4.15 Film:** A Cinderella Story. (2004) **5.20** 5 News Update. **5.25 Film:** A Cinderella Story. (2004) Concluded.
6.00 Film: Johnny English Reborn. (2011) A bumbling former secret agent is lured out of seclusion to foil an attempt to assassinate the premier of China. Spy comedy sequel, starring Rowan Atkinson and Gillian Anderson.
8.00 Billionaire Kids: Diamond Lives. Documentary about the luxurious lives of children from wealthy families, as well as the companies able to make a profit by catering to the youngsters' every whim.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. With two housemates evicted on Friday night, the remaining celebrities embark on their final week, knowing only one of them can be crowned winner on Friday night.
10.05 Film: The Boy Next Door. (2015) Premiere. A newly single teacher's flirtation with a handsome teenager living next door begins to spiral out of control. Thriller, starring Jennifer Lopez and Ryan Guzman.
11.35 Film: Her Last Will. (2016) Premiere. A conwoman hatches a plan to drive an old woman insane to allow her children to inherit the family fortune. Thriller, starring Rya Kihlstedt and Patrick Fischler.
1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Celebrity 100 Per Cent Hotter: The BIG Challenge. (R) **4.00** Britain's Greatest Bridges. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Great Artists. (R) **5.35** House Busters. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** The Coffee Trail with Simon Reeve **9.00** Timeshift: The Men Who Built the Liners **10.00** Machines **11.05** BBC Proms 2017 **12.35** Classic Soul at the BBC **1.35** Art, Passion & Power: The Story of the Royal Collection **2.35** Timeshift: The Men Who Built the Liners **3.05** Close

ITV2
11.35 Take Me Out **12.55** The Voice UK **2.20 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **3.20** FYI Daily **3.25 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **3.55 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **5.10** FYI Daily **5.15 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **5.45 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **6.45** FYI Daily **6.50 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.15** Release the Hounds **2.10** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.55 Lewis **1.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **11.05 Film:** Evil Under the Sun (1982) **1.20** Blue Murder **2.40** Rosemary & Thyme **3.55** Road to Avonlea **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
12.45 Darts: The Masters Live. Coverage of day three from Milton Keynes. **5.00** Storage Wars **6.00** Pawn Stars **7.00** Darts: The Masters Live. Further coverage of day three from Milton Keynes. **10.30 Film:** Harry Brown (2009) **11.30** FYI Daily **11.35 Film:** Harry Brown (2009) **12.35** Minder **2.35** Football's Greatest: Thierry Henry **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
1.00 Film: Toy Story OF TERROR! (2013) **1.30** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **10.15** The Big Bang Theory **11.15** Gogglebox **1.20** Rude Tube **2.20** First Dates **3.15** First Dates Abroad

Film4
11.00 The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951) **1.00** Cheaper By the Dozen 2 (2005) **2.50** Dunston Checks In (1996) **4.30** Journey to the Center of the Earth (1959) **7.05** The Cold Light of Day (2012) **9.00** The Wolf of Wall Street (2013) **12.30** Red State (2011) **2.10** A Better Life (2011) **4.00** Close

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Town, Channel 5, 12.05am
A thief takes a bank manager hostage while he and his gang make their getaway, only to later learn she lives in the same neighbourhood as him. As FBI agents close in, he tries to befriend her to make sure she cannot identify him, but as he falls in love with her, he considers changing his ways - risking the fury of his unstable partner in crime. Drama, directed by and starring Ben Affleck. With Rebecca Hall and Jeremy Renner. (2010)

TUESDAY
The Wrong Nanny, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. Stella hires a nanny to take care of her twin boys, only to find out the woman she hired is her daughter that she gave up for adoption. Thriller, starring Madison Adams. (2017)

WEDNESDAY
The Stranger Inside, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Premiere. A woman and her husband who are trying to have a baby become the target of their fertility doctor. Thriller, starring Sofia Milos. (2016)

The Town, Monday, Channel 5, 12.05am

THURSDAY
Escaping Dad, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman goes on the run with her children to escape an abusive husband. But he is the District Attorney and uses his legal connections to put out an amber alert on his missing family. Thriller, starring Sunny Mabrey, Jason Wiles, Grace Van Dien and Rick Overton. (2017)

FRIDAY
My Daughter Is Innocent, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two teenage girls are accused of a brutal murder and one mother is determined to prove her daughter's innocence. However, all may not be as it seems. Thriller, starring Victoria Pratt. (2017)

Calvary, BBC2, 11.05pm
A priest tries to put his community's affairs in order as he waits for a meeting with a man who has vowed to kill him. Drama, starring Brendan Gleeson, Chris O'Dowd, Kelly Reilly, Aidan Gillen and Dylan Moran. (2014)

Matilda looks to connect the dots in thrilling new series

Sometimes, the scariest dramas aren't the goriest or the ones that make you jump, but the subtle stories that rely on mood and a slowly building sense of disquiet that creeps up on you.

That's what writer Kris Mrksa is aiming to do with his new six-part series Requiem, which is partly inspired by such classic psychological horrors as The Innocents, Rosemary's Baby and Don't Look Now.

Or as actress Lydia Wilson, who plays the main character Matilda Gray, puts it when asked what drew her to the role: "What I really liked was the fact that it was a psychological drama, but in a sneaky way. Matilda is a girl from London in Converse trainers, whose life suddenly spirals into this giant mystery.

"Requiem starts off with the banality of everyday London, and then it suddenly goes, 'Woah!'"

Although she may dress like an ordinary twentysomething, the first episode makes it clear that there is something unusual about Matilda – she's a successful cellist. In fact, she about to head off to New York to begin a concert tour when her mother Janice (Joanna Scanlon) takes her own life.

As far as Matilda is concerned, there were no hints that her mum was suicidal. To make sense of the tragedy, she goes through a box that was on Janice's bed, and finds it contains items relating to Carys Howell, a young girl who went missing from a small Welsh village more than 20 years ago.

In a bid to discover if there's a link between her mother's death and the toddler's disappearance, Matilda and her loyal accompanist Hal (Joel Fry) set off for Penllynith.

Lydia can understand why Matilda needs to get to the bottom of Janice's suicide. "That's the key relationship in the whole drama. Like a lot of single-parent families, they're friends, as well as a mother and a daughter. Matilda is filled with grief about Janice's suicide.

"She is now at a crossroads in her life. She can either fall apart or she could channel her sadness into an obsessive search for her true identity. That's a much more bearable way of dealing with her grief."

However, it seems Matilda may not be only one grieving as she arrives in Penllynith on the day that the funeral of Ewan Dean, a wealthy local landowner who died in mysterious circumstances, is being held.

Ewan's Australian nephew Nick (James Frecheville), who has inherited the estate, invites the musicians to stay at Dean House, which Matilda recognises from a photo in a mother's box. But could there be another reason why the property seems so familiar – and increasingly sinister?

Lydia suspects viewers will want to keep tuning into Requiem, which will be shown internationally by Netflix, to find out. "I hope audiences will fall in love with this world and want to keep coming back to it. I hope they will feel like we did when we made it – intrigued by this strange thing that doesn't look like anything else."

Lydia Wilson stars in Requiem, Friday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Winterwatch 2018
BBC2, 9pm
The team returns to the National Trust's Sherborne Park Estate in the heart of the Cotswold countryside, and although this is the third consecutive season they have spent here, the familiar surroundings still hold many surprises. Michaela Strachan and Chris Packham are based at the cosy barn on the estate, bringing updates from the remote cameras rigged throughout Gloucestershire, and Martin Hughes-Games continues his investigations into some of the harder-to-find animal characters, including trout, lesser horseshoe bats, red kites and skylarks. Meanwhile, Gillian Burke is on the road once more, coming live from the island of Islay just off the west coast of Scotland. This is a special place in the winter - it's unique position in relation to the jetstream makes it a haven for all kinds of wildlife, including otters and golden eagles.

TUESDAY
Can You Rebuild My Brain?
Channel 4, 10pm
When Lotje Sodderland was 34, her brain was permanently damaged by a stroke that almost killed her. It fundamentally changed her and how she saw the world but it also left her fascinated with the science that saved her life. Cameras follow Lotje as meets neuroscience pioneers - scientists who are using the latest knowledge to repair 'broken' brains and developing ground-breaking treatments for everything from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's to autism. Lotje examines the risks as well as the rewards associated with fixing something experts don't yet fully understand.

WEDNESDAY
The Truth About Getting Fit
BBC1, 8pm
Michael Mosley and a team of scientists investigate the some of the easiest and most effective ways to get the biggest benefits of exercise. In Sheffield, the team test whether walking 10,000 steps a day is more effective than doing short 10 minute brisk walks, and in London, Michael installs a bike in an office to test whether workers can get fit by doing just two minutes of intense exercise a week. Elsewhere in the programme, Michael also joins strength experts in Glasgow to do a 6 week experiment, comparing the effects of heavy and light weights for building muscle.

THURSDAY
Death Row 2018 with Trevor McDonald
ITV, 9pm
Five years on from his harrowing fortnight at the maximum-security Indiana State Prison, Sir Trevor McDonald returns to meet the new arrivals on death row as well as some familiar faces. He is reunited with Ronald Sanford, who killed two elderly women at the age of 13. Sanford was incarcerated at 15 years old and although he has spent the last two decades educating himself, the reality is that he will most likely end his life here. The prisoner opens up about the disturbing childhood that, he claims, made him able to commit such heinous acts. However, another inmate, the remorseless William Clyde Gibson, from South Indiana, who was sentenced to death in June 2014 for killing and mutilating three women, disagrees. 'Everybody thinks when you do the type of stuff I did, people automatically think it's because you had a bad childhood,' he says. 'I had a perfectly normal childhood.'

Death Row 2018 with Trevor McDonald, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY
Nigel Slater's Middle East
BBC2, 9pm
Some countries seem to attract more celebrity chefs on culinary adventures than other – Italy has definitely played host to more than its fair share of TV cooks. But in this new series, Nigel Slater is going off the beaten track as he tours the Middle East, which is home to some of the oldest and grandest cuisines in the world. His journey begins in the Lebanon, where he learns how the country's dishes are influenced by its position on the Mediterranean. As he travels from Beirut to the Beqaa Valley, close to the Syrian border, eating with local families and home cooks, he learns more about the people's resilience in the face of decades of war, and how that it is reflected in their pride in their culture and cuisine.

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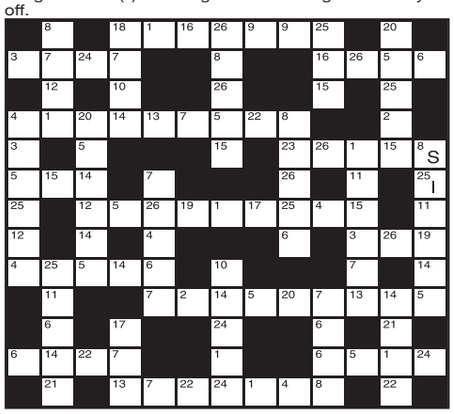
BRAIN GYM

No.464

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



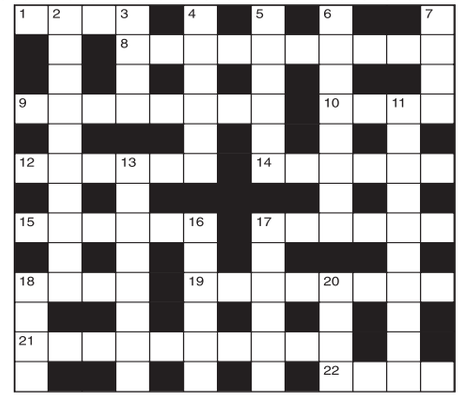
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8 S	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25 I
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
C	M	G	R	Y	Q	V	O	K	S	J	A	I
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
P	T	X	E	N	Z	F	U	L	H	W	D	B

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Creatures put in a trap, escaped (4)
8. Official note in which half the comments can't be matched (10)
9. Is apprehensive about the plumage (8)
10. A number of letters for a job (4)
12. The light touch of an oarsman (6)
14. Trim the Christmas tree (6)
15. The medicine-man hides the pictures (6)
17. Valuing scrap metal inside (6)
18. Insect with reversed barb (4)
19. It's cheap to supply a literary pot-pourri (8)
21. Set and convert into a cotton field (10)
22. After this the board will make a piece of furniture (4)

Down

2. Footman needs a trip for a change (10)
3. A little science to upset the Caledonian (4)
4. Current measure makes mother return to father in Paris! (6)
5. Maledictions producing sure confusion in the Civil Service (6)
6. To cause depression I'd upset the alcohol (8)
7. The others don't work (4)
11. It will take only a minute to go all round this kind of shop (6-4)
13. Never too disturbed to produce a harmonic (8)
16. Seem to be an equal, we hear (6)
17. Rough woodwork for the yokel (6)
18. Substitutes stop in front of these (4)
20. Places providing refreshment in opposite directions (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Pitch (4)
8. Volcanic tremor (10)
9. Sham (8)
10. Yawn (4)
12. Set fire to (6)
14. Golf club (6)
15. Cherish (6)
17. Beer-maker (6)
18. Russian ruler (4)
19. Contemplate (8)
21. Frustrate (10)
22. So be it (4)

Down

2. Scandalous (10)
3. Despatched (4)
4. Fruit (6)
5. Protect (6)
6. Bog (8)
7. Measure (4)
11. Priority (10)
13. Gap (8)
16. Formula (6)
17. Brigand (6)
18. Neat (4)
20. Jot (4)

Sudoku

				4			1	
2		9	7	5			3	
		4			1	9		2
9				1	7			4
	7	1				6	2	
5				6				3
		2	3				4	
	4				8	3		5
	5			9	4			

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	1	2	7	8	6	4	5	9
8	4	6	9	3	5	1	7	2
7	9	5	2	4	1	3	8	6
4	3	1	6	7	8	9	2	5
6	8	9	3	5	2	7	1	4
2	5	7	4	1	9	6	3	8
5	2	3	1	9	4	8	6	7
1	6	4	8	2	7	5	9	3
9	7	8	5	6	3	2	4	1

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Omega; 8 Outcast; 9 Bring to; 10 An end; 12 Essentials; 15 At half-mast; 18 Keats; 19 Tellers; 21 Fortune; 22 Serve. Down: 1 Double talk; 2 Remit; 3 Gang; 4 Morose; 5 Atlantis; 6 Cameras; 11 Distressed; 13 Sells out; 14 Theatre; 16 Matter; 17 Heart; 20 Lose. QUICK - Across: 7 Barge; 8 Observe; 9 Exploit; 10 Alter; 12 Disrespect; 15 Omniscient; 18 Still; 19 Fervour; 21 Cleaner; 22 Round. Down: 1 Obsequious; 2 Erupt; 3 Zero; 4 Porter; 5 Assassin; 6 Written; 11 Retrograde; 13 Insolent; 14 Infidel; 16 Inform; 17 Vogue; 20 Rare.

Quiz

1. What is the name of the sequel to Milton's Paradise Lost?
2. Which avant-garde New York rock group featured Lou Reed and John Cale?
3. Whose vice-president was Richard Nixon?
4. Of which group of islands is Espiritu Santo the largest?
5. What position would we call that of the Taoiseach?
6. Which British tennis player won the 1994 Korean Open?
7. By what name do we know the spider Latrodectus mactans?
8. Who is the current UK Poet Laureate?
9. Which former Bishop of London has become a Roman Catholic priest?
10. In which African country is Abuja?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Old Vic; 2 Karl Marx; 3 John Dos Passos; 4 Dorchester; 5 JRR Tolkein; 6 Nereids or nereides; 7 Honey-bee poison; 8 Pontius Pilate; 9 Textured vegetable protein; 10 1975.

Niner: FILAMENTS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

967178 gives a fuel,
531168 gives a type of fuel,
4629 gives a power.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Allo, allo! Finer taste of France

STOURBRIDGE High Street can be a pleasant place to wander around on any given day.

On a Friday, it's particularly lively, with plenty of independent shops, restaurants and bars offering the perfect place to take the weight off, meet up with friends and family – or even to start the Friday night fun a bit early.

One place that really stands out is the French Connection Bistro, and I was lucky enough to try the place out with my wife, Kelly, while enjoying my birthday. We don't tend to venture into Stourbridge that often and it's even more rare we get to spend the afternoon together while our three-year-old daughter, Annabelle, is at nursery.

But the opportunity of enjoying some lovely French food was too good to miss – so the cinema idea was binned in favour for some top grub and fine wine.

Tasty – tuck in at The French Connection

Plenty of choice in selection of starters

RUSTIC

Pretty much everyone has tried French cuisine at some point in their lives, but I was a French restaurant virgin. One thing I can say, however, is entering French Connection is like being teleported from the hustle, bustle of a busy Black Country town, into a rustic, homely and cosy restaurant sat in the middle of a village in France.

I had visions of how it might look and it was exactly what I'd hoped for – quiet, quaint, well laid out, plenty of space and the right amount of privacy. There was also some nice French background music too.

Each meal is individually prepared using ingredients that have usually been freshly delivered each day. The chef has more than 22 years experience and all the food is served straight from the pan to your plate.

The menu, as you'd expect, was wide ranging. Some of it was very reasonable while other options were pretty pricey, which is what you'd expect when ordering something like lobster.

There was also a lunchtime menu too, which changes according to the season and the availability of ingredients. Any food intolerance or allergy issues can also be catered for if staff are informed before placing an order. As it was a lunchtime meal and we didn't fancy anything too heavy, we opted for the three courses for £14.95 – served noon to 2.30pm – which was a very reasonable for what we got.

An example of the food on offer included homemade vegetable soup with French bread and butter, French coarse pork pate served with toasted baguette and salad garnish, mushroom ravioli with mushroom sauce and Parmesan, and smoked salmon mousse with prawn salad (for an extra £1) – and they were just the starters.

The mains were equally as impressive and included the likes of salmon fillet with coarse grain mustard sauce served with poached egg and crushed potatoes, beef stuffed peppers, and butterbean and cheese bake in a Filo pastry dish.

There was also a 'fish of the day' option, which happened to be homemade fisherman's pie topped with potatoes and served vegetables.

The desserts, like the starters and mains, change regularly so what you get can be a bit of a lottery. But if ours were anything to go by, it's a lottery you cannot lose.

We shared a bottle of Riviera which, without pretending to be connoisseurs, was possibly the nicest merlot we had ever tasted.It was a great start to a birthday weekend. JAMES FISHER

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Welcoming home is spacious and has been refurbished

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Also being within walking distance to local amenities, it is for sale through loveyourpostcode.com at £369,950.

The property has open plan living space and a unique design, meaning this family home could be exactly what you're looking for. The property has driveway parking for several vehicles, a garage and further off-road parking.

The door opens into an entrance hallway which branches off to all rooms. The first room to your right is one of three bedrooms, which is a double finished to a modern and neutral design.

Following back out to the right you have a single bedroom. Leading the right of the hallway you have the first family shower room which features a modern suite.

There is a second double bedroom, again finished with a modern décor, and having a view of the rear garden.

The main feature of this family bungalow is the open plan lounge and dining area. It has a front bay window and rear patio doors, allowing plenty of light to both rooms and views of the rear garden.

The open modern kitchen has a range of floor-based and wall-mounted units and also includes fitted appliances. It is again finished with a modern and neutral décor.

To the first floor is the landing. The master bedroom is of an excellent size and this home also has a modern family bathroom. There is an additional dressing area with fitted cupboards.

From the landing is the study area or single bedroom. The external space to this property is versatile with off-road parking, a garage and a very large private rear garden. The property has new wooden floors, carpets, double glazed windows and gas central heating.

WEST BROMWICH £369,950

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KEY FEATURES

- Spacious detached bungalow
- Modern & refurbished
- 4/5 bedrooms
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Delightful and spacious bungalow is for sale

A delightful two-bedroomed semi-detached bungalow, 3 Myrtle Terrace, Tipton, is for sale through Skitts Estate Agents at £150,000 with no chain.

The property has great access to local schools such as The RSA Academy and Ocker Hill Primary.

This deceptively large residence has been maintained to a high specification with the kitchen fitted with a range of units, both bedrooms have built-in wardrobes, a good-sized lounge, a shower/wet room, a large conservatory and front gardens. In more detail the entrance hallway has an inner hall off which has loft access.

TIPTON
£150,000

The lounge has a bay window to the front, a gas fire with a marble-effect back and hearth.

Bedroom one has fitted wardrobes, a window to the rear and a television point and telephone point and ceiling coving.

Bedroom two has a window to the front, fitted wardrobes and ceiling coving.

The conservatory has plumbing for a dishwasher, a telephone point, a television point and French doors leading out to the rear garden.

For further information, or to book that all important viewing to see if this is the ideal next home for you, contact Skitts on 0121 520 2255.

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CGI of the 2 bedroom Morton at The Laurels. Elevations and finishes may vary. *Available on selected plots reserved before 31st January 2018, subject to terms and conditions. **Help to buy available upon request subject to terms and conditions.

Four-bedroom property with large gardens has no chain

An exceptional family home, Beulah in Clarkes Grove, Tipton, is for sale through Connells estate agents at £400,000 with no chain.

TIPTON
£400,000

Previous planning permission was granted for an extra three properties on the site.

It has an entrance hall, a downstairs bathroom, a lounge, a dining area, a kitchen with a gas oven with an electric hob and cooker hood, plumbing for a washing machine and a door to the side.

There is also a conservatory and a downstairs bedroom with an en-suite.

Upstairs there is bedroom one with wardrobes, bedroom two and bedroom three, plus a shower room.

Outside wrought iron gates open to the driveway and parking area with brick buildings and a carport and gardens.

This home is set in large grounds and is close to transport links, making it ideal for commuting.

The rear garden has a lawned area with various borders and shrubs.

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Aston Villa Football Ground
Starting at 10:30am

AUCTION

OVER 130 LOTS

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Plus properties on behalf of Receivers/Housing Associations

Birmingham City Council | City of Wolverhampton Council | Sandwell | Canal & River Trust

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3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £155,000+ (plus fees)

22 Napier Road, Wolverhampton
2 Bed Mid Terraced House
Guide: £19,000-£24,000 (plus fees)

1 Rosemary Avenue, Bilston
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £19,000-£24,000 (plus fees)

696 Hagley Road West, Oldbury
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £99,000+ (plus fees)

78 Green Lane, Great Barr
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £60,000+ (plus fees)

Athlone, Angela Place, Bilston
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £45,000+ (plus fees)

210 Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield
4 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £195,000+ (plus fees)

95 Lime Street, Pennfields
2 Bed Mid Terraced House
Guide: £59,000+ (plus fees)

111 Apsley Road, Oldbury
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £135,000+ (plus fees)

86 Kingsbury Road, Erdington
Residential Investment Property
Current Gross Income: £28,020 pa.
Guide: £250,000+ (plus fees)

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Family home with potential is appealing and spacious

OLDBURY
£152,500

<<<

This three-bedroomed end terrace house in Tame Road, Oldbury, is an extremely spacious property, situated in a popular and convenient location.

Within walking distance of local amenities and good local schools, it is in need of some updating, although it does have excellent potential.

An ideal first-time buy, it is for sale through Braithwaites Estate Agents at £152,500 with no chain.

With gas central heating and double glazing, its accommodation includes a porch, an entrance hall, an extended through lounge/dining area, a fitted dining kitchen, three bedrooms, a bathroom, a study/office and a rear garage.

To book a viewing, contact Braithwaites on 0121 4211180 or visit www.braithwaites-estate-agents.co.uk

Superb six-bedroom detached property

WEST BROMWICH
£675,000

A tremendous property, this six-bedroomed detached residence in Lloyd Street, West Bromwich, is for sale through Connells Estate Agents at £675,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises three reception areas, a kitchen/diner, a utility room, two bathrooms, six bedrooms, two with en-suites, a double garage, a stunning entrance hall with stairs and a large galleried landing off and off-road parking, garden and garage.

In more detail the entrance hall also has floor-to-ceiling feature windows. There is a downstairs shower room, lounge, a dining room, kitchen and a utility room to the ground floor.

Contact Connells on 0121 525 1177.

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696 Hagley Road West, Oldbury
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Athlone, Angela Place, Bilston
3 Bed Semi Detached House
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210 Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield
4 Bed Semi Detached House
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95 Lime Street, Pennfields
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Guide: £59,000+ (plus fees)

111 Apsley Road, Oldbury
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4 Pets & Animals

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Pets Corner

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1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

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5 Business & Farming

business directory

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SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Planning
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/17/61372	Mr Ray Gibbs Thimblemill Recreation and Entertainment Centre Ltd	Land Between The New Lodge And The Old Lodge Thimblemill Road Smethwick B67 6NR	Proposed construction of 13 No. 4 bedroom, 2 storey dwellings, detached double garages and landscaping works (Renewal of extant consent DC/14/56819).

The Council are of the opinion that the proposal may affect the setting of a listed building.

DC/18/61390	Mr Ali Hussain	1 Church Square Oldbury B69 4DX	Proposed conversion into 5 bed hotel, with cafe on the ground floor. Internal alterations. External alterations to include new timber windows, boundary wall removal, pillars retained (front elevation), rear masonry boundary wall removed; roof repaired and made good, and render made good.

The proposed development may affect the setting of a Listed Building(s), and the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

DC/18/61391	Mr Ali Hussain	1 Church Square Oldbury B69 4DX	Proposed conversion into 5 bed hotel, with cafe on the ground floor. Internal alterations. External alterations to include new timber windows, boundary wall removal, pillars retained (front elevation), rear masonry boundary wall removed; roof repaired and made good, and render made good.

This is a major application.

DC/17/61351	City Logistics (UK) Ltd	Land On The North Western Side Of Western Road Oldbury	Proposed change of use to vehicle storage and transport yard with palisade boundary fencing and gates.

This is a major application.

DC/17/61289	Mrs S Chall Superior Care Ltd	Site Of 50 Former Valentino Restaurant Newbury Lane Oldbury	Proposed care home with associated parking.

This is a major application.

DC/18/61399	Miss Heather Birch Lovell Partnerships Ltd	Harvills Hawthorn PFI Harvills Hawthorn West Bromwich	Proposed variation of condition 1 of planning approval DC/13/56206 – to amend the layout to avoid deep sewer pipe diversion.

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.45a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.45a.m. to 5.00p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR JAN BRITTON, Chief Executive

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Devonshire Road, Smethwick) (Temporary Road Closure and One-Way Operation) Order 2018, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding via parts of Devonshire Road, Smethwick as listed below. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 25/04/18 effective from 30/01/18. It is anticipated that the work will be carried out in three phases: Phase 1 – Sabell Road – Stony Lane (30/01/18-18/02/18). Vehicles will be permitted to travel in a south easterly direction only. A diversion route will be signed for north westbound traffic via Stony Lane, High Street, Sabell Road and vice-versa. Phase 2 – St Alban's Road – Sabell Road (19/02/18-25/02/18). Vehicles will be prohibited from travelling in any direction via this stretch of road. A diversion route will be signed via Sabell Road, St Paul's Road, Bertram Road and via St Alban's Road, St Paul's Road, Sabell Road taking into account the one-way streets. Phase 3 – Holly Lane – Walter Road (25/02/18-25/04/18). Vehicles will be permitted to travel in a north westerly direction only. A diversion route will be signed for south east bound traffic via Holly Lane, St Paul's Road and Sabell Road. The junctions at Topsham Road, Bertram Road and Bowden Road will be kept open to traffic. Purpose – gas main renewal scheme by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas Ltd.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Bridge Street North, Smethwick) (Temporary One-Way Operation) Order 2018, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit vehicles from proceeding along Bridge Street North, Smethwick other than in a northerly direction. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 12/03/18, effective from 05/02/18. Alternative route for south bound vehicles via Cornwall Road, Rabone Lane and Rolfe Street. Purpose – gas main renewal scheme by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas Ltd.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Forge Lane, West Bromwich and Park Lane, Birmingham) (Temporary 30mph Speed Restriction) Order 2018, has made an Order to temporarily introduce a 30mph speed restriction on Forge Lane, West Bromwich and Park Lane, Birmingham. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 01/02/19 effective from 01/02/18. Purpose – the temporary speed restriction is required for safety reasons due to the anticipated increase in HGV's as a result of the commencement of flood defence works to the River Tame by Jackson Civils (working on behalf of the Environment Agency).

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Coles Lane, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2018, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding via Coles Lane, West Bromwich (Bedford Road – Trotters Lane). The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 07/02/18 effective from 05/02/18. A diversion route will be signed via Bedford Road, Huntingdon Road, Denbigh Drive and Trotters Lane. The terms of the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Coles Lane, West Bromwich) Order 1977 in as far as it relates to the stretch of Coles Lane located between Bedford Road and Trotters Lane will be suspended throughout the duration of the works. Purpose – relaying of a water pipe by Onsite for South Staffs Water.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Grove Lane, Smethwick) (Temporary One-Way Operation) Order 2018, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding other than in a northerly direction via Grove Lane, Smethwick. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 09/02/18 effective from 05/02/18. A diversion route will be signed for southbound traffic via Windmill Lane and Cape Hill. Purpose – removal of tower crane from Midlands Metropolitan Hospital site by Carillion Plc.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Langley Green Level Crossing, Crosswells Road, Oldbury) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2018, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Crosswells Road, Oldbury between Western Road and Thompson Road. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 11/02/18 (10.00hrs) effective from 10/02/18 (22.00hrs). Traffic will be diverted via Western Road, Tat Bank Road, Vicarage Road and vice-versa. Purpose – tamping through Langley Green Level Crossing and inspection of the track – Network Rail.

GEORGE LEONARD STAPLES (Deceased)
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KEITH BERTIE LINLEY (Deceased)
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A relaxed and refined cruiser with divisive American style

Vignale is a range-topping trim

By Tom Wiltshire

Ford's Vignale nameplate is a luxury sub-brand, which Ford says is a response to customer feedback. Loyal buyers of the American brand were buying more and more top-spec Titanium models, leaving them nothing higher to upgrade to when trade-in time came around.

In response, Ford's added Vignale trim across its model line-up, which acts as a range-topping trim – giving customers extra kit, improved materials, chrome detailing, and dedicated Vignale benefits.

We're testing Ford's flagship SUV – the Edge – in this glitzy Vignale spec. On the outside, the Edge Vignale gets a selection of exclusive paint colours. Once it's been painted, Ford lets its design team loose with chrome detailing – there's a massive and imposing Vignale-specific grille, glitzy chrome wheels and shiny roof rails.

Inside, the Vignale gets quilted leather seats, while Ford's covered the plastic dashboard with swathes of leather. The carpet's thicker, and even the boot is coated in deep-pile shag. Under the skin not much has changed, but there's extra soundproofing to make the Vignale a relaxed and refined cruiser.

The Edge Vignale is available with just one 2.0-litre diesel, available in two states of tune. The lesser model gets 178bhp and a six-speed manual gearbox, while

It's certainly an eye-ctaching car

the top brass can choose the 207bhp version mated to a six-speed auto. Our car was the latter. The engine is fairly refined, but it's definitely no speed demon.

Ford has a strong track record for making cars that handle well, and the Edge is no exception. For such a big car it's unusually good in the corners. But in standard form, the Edge is a very heavy car; the Vignale even more so – and you can definitely feel that weight working against you. The steering is accurate, but feels overassisted – a necessary evil when trying to give such a big car light steering.

Divisive, in a word. Some will love the Edge's combination of imposing American style and shiny chrome – others will find it a bit chintzy. We initially fell into the latter camp, but had to admit the car grew on us as the week drew on. It's certainly eye-catching, and if you want road presence few cars at this price are better. The big problem for most is presented in the centre of that vast front grille – the Ford badge. Unfortunately, the blue oval simply doesn't have the prestige of BMW, Audi or Mercedes, and that will affect your standing in the company car park and, more importantly, residual values.

The Edge's interior is a tale of two halves – the top of the dashboard is a great example, where swathes of premium leather meet a cheap, plasticky storage bin. There's a sense that Ford's expended effort on upgrading materials that didn't need upgrading – like the door cards – and ignored ones that should have, such as the centre console.

The standard Sync3 infotainment is a mixed bag too. It has one of the most intuitive interfaces around, but unfortunately features an ugly UI and a poor-quality screen which is recessed awkwardly into the dash.

Four adults can sit comfortably, and the vast boot has over 600 litres of space. It's also eerily silent on the motorway, thanks to lots of sound deadening. Ford throws the book at Vignale models as standard, and you won't be left wanting for much. Dynamic LED headlights, quilted and heated leather seats, a hands-free electric tailgate and digital gauge cluster all come as standard. You also get Ford's Sync3 infotainment system, with sat-nav, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

If you want a big, luxurious SUV, the Edge Vignale has a lot going for it. There's a sense that if you're already sold on the Edge, opting for the Vignale wouldn't be too big a stretch. Those who do go for it will find a spacious, relaxed SUV with a comfortably familiar badge on the bonnet.

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Inside the so far concept car, is this futuristic cabin

Kia Niro EV is leading firm's electric car charge

Kia has unveiled an electric Niro SUV and promises it'll have a range of 238 miles when it arrives early in 2019.

Currently dubbed a "concept", the car showcases the brand's new electric vehicle technology and spearheads a charge by the Korean manufacturer to bring a whole range of electrified cars to the roads.

At the CES Show in Las Vegas, Kia said it will offer 16 electrified vehicles – including hybrids, EV and fuel cell EVs – by 2025. An executive also let slip that the refreshed Sportage, due to arrive in the summer, will be the first to offer a hybrid option.

Although billed as a concept, the Niro EV will be launched to the press later this year and go on sale in early 2019. It is fitted with a 201bhp electric powertrain with power coming from a 64kWh lithium-polymer battery pack.

The Niro show car is fitted with an Active Pedestrian Warning System which alerts drivers to pedestrians or cyclists crossing in front of the car.

While the looks on the outside are a departure from the existing Niro, much is likely to make it across to the production car. Inside, though, some of the clever tech might not get the green light.

A Human Machine Interface for the infotainment and heating lets drivers control it by swiping a touchpad area on the steering wheel, while the car can understand voice recognition and, if it does not identify the driver, can shut down key functions.

Kia executives also hinted at a new longer-range electric Soul arriving soon, and said the next Cee'd – due in the summer – will have hybrid and electric options, as will the baby Stonic too.

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Wayne Thomas with some of the children enrolled on his Ace Academy sessions

Thomas puts children through their paces

Martin O'Connor will lead the Ace Academy experience course

Youngsters at Ace Academy enjoy the coaching sessions

Sessions are run at venues across Walsall

Former Saddler nurtures Ace new football talent

SPORTING FEATURE

By Joseph Masi

"We now have lots of different age categories and that really helps the players develop."

A FOOTBALL academy launched by ex-Walsall midfielder Wayne Thomas is inviting youngsters to lace up their boots to kick off the new year.

Ace Academy runs coaching sessions for youngsters aged between two-and-half and 11 at various locations across Walsall.

Launched two years ago, 120 young footballers currently attend each week where they enjoy taking part in technical training sessions as well as playing games.

Children between the ages of two-and-a-half and four can receive a social introduction to football by joining Mini-Aces.

Youngsters aged from five to seven are invited to play with the Little Aces while juniors aged seven plus can team up with the Ace Academy.

Delighted

Alongside the coaching sessions, Ace Academy also runs futsal groups for children aged between seven and 14 while next season they expect to have seven teams playing grassroots football in the Walsall Junior Youth League.

And Thomas, aged 39, he is delighted with how the academy is progressing.

"I launched Ace Academy back in 2016 to try and bridge the gap between grassroots football and academy football," said the former Saddler, who played 18 games for the club over a four-year period.

"Since then it's grown a lot quicker than I expected and we now run nine different sessions each week for children of all different ages.

Midfielder Wayne Thomas as a Walsall player

"The aim is to try and cater for everyone," Thomas added. "Children aged from two-and-a-half can join the Mini-Aces which is full of fun games and gives them an introduction into football. But it's more a social thing for them.

"The majority of our kids enrol on an Ace Academy experience course which sees them attend a training session once a week. They then play games against professional academies.

"We have just agreed that former Walsall midfielder Martin O'Connor, who is a UEFA A Licence coach, will help head that up in the new year.

"And next season we also plan to extend our grassroots arm.

"We currently have an under-7s team. But we have plans to have seven teams of different age groups competing in the Walsall Junior Youth League.

"Ace actually stands for attitude, confidence and enjoyment. And that's what it's all about, to give these children a chance to enjoy their football and have fun."

Thomas, who also works as commercial manager at his former club Walsall, revealed he decided to start the academy after his eldest two sons were released from professional clubs.

"I've got four boys and one of them was released aged 12 and the other was released aged eight." he continued.

"I felt there was a lack of quality coaching in the area and I wanted to do something about bridging that gap between grassroots football and academy football.

"Academy football at professional football clubs isn't for everyone. It can come with a lot of pressure, both for the players themselves and for their families.

"And sometimes it might be better for a young footballer to join an academy when they are a little bit older, rather when they are seven or eight years old.

"Since we started in 2016, we have had five lads leave Ace to join academies at professional clubs. But we have also had a lot of lads turn those clubs down because they are enjoying developing with us."

Develop

Thomas believes one of the big benefits of Ace Academy is the number of youngsters now on board.

"I coach four evenings a week and absolutely love it, as do all the coaches," he added. "What's nice is that we now have lots of different age categories and that really helps the players develop,

"If we have got a three-and-a-half-year-old who technically or physically is developing faster than his peers, we can then put him with the under-fives.

"And it's the same if we have an older player, say a six-year-old, who is a bit shy. He can play with the under-fives to help build his confidence.

"The important thing is they all enjoy it and and all succeed and thankfully we have got the environment to ensure they can."

For more information on Ace Academy and for times and venues of their coaching sessions visit https://www.facebook.com/footballaceacademy/

Title bouts added to Gavin fight bill

TWO IBO continental titles will be on the line on the undercard of Frankie Gavin's IBO welterweight world title shot in his home city next month.

Top of the BCB Promotions bill on February 23 at Birmingham's Genting Arena is Gavin against Bethuel Ushona for the IBO Welterweight crown.

Redditch's Andrew Robinson, a former WBO European and British title challenger, takes on Birmingham's Craig Cunningham for the vacant middleweight crown. Meanwhile, former Midland champion Craig Morris of Ludlow will make the first defence of his strap against Leek's Andy Keates.

Undefeated Wolverhampton bantamweight Kyle Williams challenges Jordan Turner for the Midlands area title.

The undercard also features Birmingham's Matt Sen against Wolverhampton's Joshua Burke at cruiserweight, Tipton light heavyweight Ricky Summers, Birmingham super bantamweight Sean Davis, Birmingham super welterweight Mussab Abubaker, West Bromwich light heavyweight Tom Stokes and Coventry's Dilly Singh.

Laura goes for Muir indoor track success

DOUBLE European Indoor champion and five-time British record holder Laura Muir will compete in the 3000m at the SPAR British Athletics Indoor Championships in Birmingham next month.

Muir, aged 24, will look to claim her first British title over the distance on February 17, having already clinched two titles at 1500m and one at 800m. She will also be looking to secure her spot on the British team for March's IAAF World Indoor Championships at the same Arena Birmingham venue.

Fellow Scots Eilish McColgan and Steph Twell have also accepted their invitations for the event. British Athletics' Major Event Director Cherry Alexander said: "We're delighted to be hosting the SPAR British Athletics Indoor Championships and world trials in Birmingham. With two places up for grabs per event on the British team ahead of the World Indoor Championships competition will be fierce."

The championships are on February 17 and 18 with tickets on sale at www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 3388222.

School lauded for its commitment to sport

A SCHOOL has been praised for its commitment to physical activity with a Youth Sport Trust Silver Quality Mark.

The Quality Mark, awarded to Ormiston Forge Academy Cradley Heath, is an online self-review tool which provides schools with a nationally recognised badge of excellence for the quality of its PE and school sport.

Dawn Benson, leader of the performance faculty, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to have been awarded the Silver Quality Mark from the Youth Sport Trust, which recognises our commitment to delivering the best possible sporting experiences for the young people at our school."

The Youth Sport Trust is a national charity that builds a brighter future for young people through the power of sport. Youth Sports Trust chief executive Alison Oliver said: "Congratulations to Ormiston Forge Academy for achieving the Youth Sport Trust Silver Quality Mark."

Students represent the academy in a number of sports and are also representing Sandwell at the Black Country Championships in badminton.

Sport

Just Ace! Former Saddlers player nurtures new talent
Page 43

Rogers new Brummies team boss

BIRMINGHAM Speedway have appointed Laurence Rogers as their new team manager for 2018.

He joins the Brummies with plenty of experience, most recently with Plymouth in the National League where he spent one season after a lengthy spell with Coventry.

Rogers has also worked alongside a number of riders during their World Championship quests including former Birmingham stars Chris Harris and Hans Nielsen as well as being a part of the USA World Cup background team since 2005.

Boss Rogers

Co-promoter David Mason is delighted to have Rogers on board. He said: "We'd looked at a couple of names but as soon as we knew Laurence was leaving Plymouth, he stood out by a mile," Mason said.

"He's done the role for a number of clubs at various levels and there's not much about the sport he doesn't know.

"When he signs up for something, he dedicates himself to that club, he instantly becomes a part of it and he goes above and beyond his role. He's already so keen to get stuck in and try and help the club continue to move forwards."

Rogers, who is local to Perry Barr, said: "My journey to and from Plymouth every week in 2017 wasn't easy and it eventually started to take its toll," Rogers said. "It's great to be involved with another club so close to my home.

"I'm now involved in the process of deciding who we go for as our final reserve and hopefully we can finalise that in the next week or two."

Season tickets remain on sale with early bird offers until February 7. See birminghambrummies.co/admission

Legend tops town hall wrestling bill

THE first-ever winner of the WWE Royal Rumble starred in a show at Darlaston Town Hall – days away from Sunday's 30th anniversary of the event.

'Hacksaw' Jim Duggan made the trip across the pond to take top billing on a Pro Wrestling Live card staged by local promoter Matt Powell in Victoria Road.

The 63-year-old dusted off his wrestling boots and trusty 2 x 4 plank of wood to do battle in the Black Country ring.

He teamed with Powell's alter ego – Mad Dog Maxx – to roll over Superstar Carlos and Sergeant Fury via pinfall in front of a near sell-out crowd.

The American wrestling legend, from Glens Falls, New York, stayed for a meet and greet, signing autographs and memorabilia for fans and posing for photos.

Duggan won the first televised Royal Rumble in 1988. He became a WWE Hall of Famer and is still signed to the company on a Legends contract.

Wednesbury back on the winning trail

Aaron Harris jumping in the lineout

Aston Old Edwardians 0 Wednesbury 33

WEDNESBURY were looking to get back on the winning trail after defeat the week before – and did so in style at Aston OE.

Right from the start Wednesbury were up for the game and John McGregor dived over for a try, with Matt Dale kicking the conversion.

With Aston under real pressure Lee Allwood dotted down and Dale again added the extras.

Within a couple of minutes it was the turn of Aaron Harris, followed by another Dale conversion. On the stroke of half-time Wednesbury's winger Stanley Zvidi went over.

There was just one second half score, from Gareth Hughes. Dale converted.

On Wednesbury are away to Essington ko 2-15.

The 2nds beat Handsworth 2nds 54-0 with points coming from two tries each from Adam Mills and Dom Weathers, and tries from Rob Embery, Matt Hadley, Rob Dale and Ben Baker with conversions from Simon Wallace, Jamie Becket and five from Rob Dale.

FURY AT UNITED CYRILLE SNUB

ALBION fans have been left 'disgusted' that Manchester United neglected to wear black armbands for Cyrille Regis.

The Premier League announced on Friday that all top tier teams would don black armbands in memory of the legendary Albion striker.

However, despite taking part in a minute's applause, United players did not wear the armbands during their 1-0 victory at Burnley.

Debbie Green, who organised a banner for Regis that was unfurled in the away end at Goodison Park on Saturday, described it 'as 'disgusting'. She said: "We did a tribute to George Best, Albion wore armbands. Why couldn't they do it for our legend? I'm shocked because as far as I'm aware, every other team have."

Applause

Football clubs and supporters up and down the country paid tribute to Regis. All Premier League clubs held a minute's applause, while in the Championship, Wolves and Villa followed suit and also wore black armbands. Villa fans also unfurled a banner to Regis.

Albion Supporters' Club chairman John Homer said: "It is a bit disrespectful. It's disappointing considering the respect we gave them when George Best had passed away."

Meanwhile, boss Alan Pardew says Albion are not fooling themselves that survival is guaranteed. Pardew believes his side are building up a head of steam after a 1-1 draw with Everton, Jay Rodriguez's third goal in five games cancelled out by Oumar Niasse's first touch from the bench.

Baggies are unbeaten in three, and have lost just one of the last six games in all competitions. But they remain three points adrift from safety and Pardew said: "We're on a knife-edge. Lose a couple of players and we're going to be in trouble.

"I don't think we're counting our chickens that we're good enough. We're on the edge, but we're playing well and there's a good confidence in the camp."

Rondon distraught at leg break

Distraught Baggies player Salomon Rondon is consoled by head coach Alan Pardew

SALOMON Rondon was left 'devastated' by James McCarthy's double leg break during the Baggies clash at Goodison Park.

The Albion striker accidentally kicked McCarthy's leg while trying to shoot at goal after the Everton midfielder had tracked back and toe-poked the ball out of the way at the last moment. McCarthy will be out for the season.

Rondon immediately called for medical assistance and demanded the referee stopped play before breaking down. Visibly distraught, he had to be consoled by team-mates and Baggies head coach Alan Pardew.

"I am absolutely devastated after such an unfortunate incident," said Rondon. "I wish James a speedy recovery."

Pardew said: "It affected him but he managed to get his head together."

Young guns check in with the Heathens

TWO talented teenagers have been snapped up by Cradley Heathens to ride in their National Trophy campaign.

Jason Edwards and Drew Kemp, both aged 15, join big-hitter Adam Roynon as confirmed starters.

Despite preparing for his first full season in the sport, Edwards has already made one guest appearance for Cradley.

He scored six paid seven in the final home meeting of 2017 against Eastbourne, the club he will ride for in this year's National League, and won his first ever race at Monmore Green. Edwards also competed in last year's F.A.S.T Golden Hammer, scoring an impressive ten points.

Drew Kemp

Edwards

Kemp, meanwhile is being tipped for big things. He will ride for Mildenhall in the National League and Heathens co-promoter Gary Patchett thanked them for allowing the deal to be done.

"We have a lot of options for the team but we wanted to have one of the talented youngsters at reserve and Drew fits the bill," Patchett said.

Of Edwards, Patchett said: "He's a very talented young rider and one that, had we been able to take a place in the League this season, we'd like to think would've been interested in a team place with the Heathens."

On oche for darts FA Cup qualifiers

RILEYS Wolverhampton will stage the first of two events this weekend offering places at the PDC's 'FA Cup of darts'.

Rileys are again working alongside the PDC to produce 32 'wildcards' to join 96 of the latter's professionals at the UK Open in Minehead, from March 2-4.

Four will prevail from two tournaments in Broad Street, Wolverhampton, on Saturday and again on February 18.

Enter online 48 hours before at www.rileys.co.uk/tournaments or in Rileys before 5pm tomorrow (Friday). Call 01902 310521.

Entry is £7. Dress code is trousers, shoes and either a shirt or polo shirt.

★★★

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